

# Alma Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102012
<b>Local Authority</b>	Enfield
<b>Inspection number</b>	355111
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Capper

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	515
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nadia Conway
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janice Feavearyear
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 September 2008
<b>School address</b>	Alma Road Ponders End Endfield EN3 4UQ
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<b>Email address</b>	office@alma-primary.org.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 22 lessons taught by 18 teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including teachers' planning, assessment information, safeguarding policies and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 148 questionnaires from parents and carers, 36 from staff and 101 from pupils in Key Stage 2. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.
- The consistency of teaching and its effectiveness at providing the right level of challenge for all pupils.
- The impact of the leaders on driving improvement.
- Pupils' responsibility taking, their involvement in the local community and how well they understand how to improve their work.

## Information about the school

Most pupils come to this larger-than-average sized primary school from the local community. The school takes pupils from many different backgrounds and English is not the home language for about four-fifths of pupils. The main home languages for these pupils are Turkish, Bengali and Somali. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in three Nursery classes, which run for either morning or afternoon sessions, and in two Reception classes. Pupils' mobility within the school is higher than normal with only six out of ten pupils in the current Year 6 having started school in the Nursery or Reception classes.

The school has several awards including a Leading in Parents' Partnership award and the International School award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Pupils enjoy coming to this satisfactory school. Leaders are committed to providing a secure and happy haven for every pupil whatever their background or need. The success of this can be seen in the smiling faces as pupils arrive each morning.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but progress is uneven across the school. Pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage where teaching is good and in English in Key Stage 2 where there is a sharp and effective focus on improving reading and writing skills. Pupils' attainment has been rising in Key Stage 2 and it is now broadly average by the end of Year 6. In contrast, attainment in Key Stage 1 has been falling and while recent improvements means that progress is now satisfactory, leaders know that there is still too much satisfactory teaching for these pupils. Throughout the school, teachers are enthusiastic but in Key Stage 1, work does not always meet differing pupils' needs well enough and targets for improvement are not always sufficiently challenging. Attainment in reading is particularly weak in Key Stage 1 because too little time is allowed for pupils to read to adults, and letter sounds are not taught systematically or regularly enough.

Pupils are well cared for and they behave well. They keenly take responsibility through the school council and other activities, helping them to make a good contribution to the community. Pupils feel very safe and develop a good knowledge of the value of staying healthy, happily participating in physical activity such as dance sessions at lunchtimes.

The new leadership team is doing the right things to move the school forward more quickly. There are satisfactory systems for evaluating school effectiveness and leaders have made a good start to improving attainment, especially in Key Stage 2 where there has been a sharp upward trend in test results. This success, as well as the improving picture in the current year across the school, demonstrates that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. However, monitoring by leaders at all levels, including subject leaders and the governing body, is not always rigorous enough to ensure that all initiatives are being applied consistently and are having the desired effect. For example, leaders have made a start to improving the curriculum by developing links between subjects but this is not yet consistently strong across the school. There is some good practice, for example in science in Year 2, but in some year groups not enough time is allowed for pupils to develop skills in subjects other than English or mathematics.

The good work of leaders to engage with parents and carers is reflected in its Leading in Parents' Partnership award. Strong partnerships with other schools are being used well to look at good practice and to improve pupils' learning. The school's International School award reflects its good contribution to community cohesion.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise attainment in Key Stage 1, especially in reading, by:
  - ensuring that teaching and target setting consistently provide the right level of challenge for all pupils
  - ensuring that enough time is allowed for pupils to read to adults
  - ensuring that letter sounds are taught more systematically and on a daily regular basis.
- Improve the curriculum so that it provides sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Strengthen leadership and management at all levels by ensuring that initiatives are monitored with greater rigour to check that they are being applied consistently and are having the desired effect.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

When children start school in the Nursery classes very few pupils are working at the levels expected for their age. From these starting points, pupils' learning is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and then satisfactory in most lessons in the rest of the school, although there is some good and occasionally outstanding progress, especially in Key Stage 2. This means that although pupils thoroughly enjoy school and attend regularly, their achievement is satisfactory and attainment is inconsistent from year to year. In some lessons progress is very brisk. For example, in an outstanding numeracy lesson, pupils worked together enthusiastically as they solved problems. Learning moved on quickly because pupils were encouraged to think like mathematicians. However, progress is not always as rapid. In a satisfactory literacy lesson, pupils acted out parts of a story. They enjoyed the activity but did not always listen well and were unclear about the purpose of what they were doing, slowing progress. In some lessons, work is too hard or too easy for some pupils and they are not expected to work quickly. In a literacy lesson about using new vocabulary to describe a character, the teacher did not make expectations for different groups of pupils clear and this meant that skills improved only slowly.

Provision for intervention groups is well planned for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and they often make good progress at these times. As with other pupils, progress in lessons, while satisfactory overall, is uneven. Pupils in the early stages of learning English also make satisfactory progress in lessons. They learn most quickly when teachers have planned specific activities to meet their particular needs.

Pupils have positive attitudes in lessons and work hard. They develop a good sense of right and wrong and the way that they cooperate in lessons is a good feature of their otherwise satisfactory preparation for their future economic well-being. Pupils' manners and politeness to visitors are exemplary and they happily take part in acts of worship.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Adults take good care of their pupils, and they give sensitive support to any who are having problems at home or at school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with increasingly good support in intervention groups outside lessons. Pupils who arrive during the year are supported well and quickly settle into school life. A well-attended breakfast club is greatly enjoyed and gives pupils a good start to the day.

There are good features to teaching throughout the school. Teachers manage behaviour well and have good relationships with pupils. Many teachers assess learning carefully and, where teaching is good, they use this information to plan what to teach next. Such good practice is not evident in all lessons, especially in Key Stage 1, and this is the main reason why much of the teaching is satisfactory. The use of marking and target setting has been a recent focus for improvement and pupils are becoming much more aware of how to improve their work.

The curriculum focuses strongly on promoting basic skills but this is not yet consistently effective across the school. The strong focus on English and mathematics sometimes restricts opportunities for pupils to develop skills in other subjects, especially at Key Stage 2. Pupils' creativity is fostered imaginatively and they produce high-quality artwork such as the fabric painting by Year 5. Good partnerships with other schools have a positive effect

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on learning. For example, a local secondary school is helping to develop the teaching of French with considerable success.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have a strong determination to improve provision and their drive and ambition are satisfactorily embedded across the school. There is a clear understanding of priorities and a start has been made to tackling them, although leaders know that there is still too much inconsistency in progress across the school, especially in Key Stage 1. Monitoring by leaders at all levels is not rigorous enough to ensure that improvements have a sustained impact over time or are applied consistently. This means that some initiatives such as a recent focus on improving the teaching of letter sounds are not as effective as hoped because not all teachers have followed the guidance of leaders consistently.

The governing body has had difficulties in recruiting members. Nevertheless, it provides sound support and challenge, although it is too reliant on the school for information rather than checking provision for itself.

The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination satisfactorily. Leaders are now rightly working to iron out the unevenness of progress across the school. There is no discrimination and pupils learn to respect each other's beliefs, reflecting the school's good contribution to community cohesion. Good engagement with parents and carers means that leaders are able to respond quickly to local needs. Pupils' understanding of life beyond Britain is developing well through recently established links with other European countries.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents are rightly pleased with the start given to their children in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children settle quickly into school life and recent improvements mean that attainment is higher in the current year than in the recent past. In the Reception classes, children's attainment is on track to improve from their low starting points to below average levels by the end of the year. Children are now making good progress in lessons because they are taught well and there is a rich curriculum. Children in the early stages of learning English are given good support and they quickly learn new vocabulary and grow in confidence.

Each class has access to a large outdoor area and this is used well to give children opportunities to explore their own ideas. For example, children in a Nursery class learn about growth by planting seeds. In the Reception classes, letters and sounds are taught systematically and this helps children to improve their skills quickly. Children are given many opportunities to work independently and often adults intervene at exactly the right time to move learning on. However, there are occasions when work does not provide the right level of challenge for all children. Teachers do not always give children enough opportunities to talk about their work at the end of sessions so that they can review learning.

Leaders monitor provision carefully and are doing the right things to improve it further. A recent focus has helped to ensure that assessments are now accurate. This is helping to raise attainment as teachers are now clearer about different starting points. Other initiatives, such as a project to improve speaking skills, are another reason why attainment is rising in the current year. Leaders are making sharper use of data to identify trends in attainment over time so that they can respond more quickly to any potential underachievement as it arises.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who returned the Ofsted questionnaire are happy with their child's experience of the school. Positive comments included, 'My child is very happy' and 'The Nursery team gives my child an enjoyable experience through learning.' A small number of parents and carers are concerned about how the school tackles unacceptable behaviour. The inspection team saw none and found that the school has good systems for tackling it on those occasions when it does occur. Concerns about the consistency of teaching and how well it meets differing needs are dealt with elsewhere in the report.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alma Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 148 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 515 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	98	66	48	32	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	88	59	52	35	6	4	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	71	48	71	48	3	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	41	68	46	12	8	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	66	45	62	42	16	11	3	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	59	40	74	50	12	8	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	58	39	75	51	13	9	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	54	36	70	47	12	8	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	36	59	40	21	14	6	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	69	47	57	39	11	7	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	36	66	45	11	7	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	57	39	67	45	13	9	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	66	45	62	42	11	7	3	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



16 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Alma Primary School, Enfield, EN3 4UQ**

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school. We found that your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that we found some good things in the school but also some things that need improving.

Here are some of the things we found out about your school.

- You learn quickly in the Nursery and Reception classes where you are taught well.
- You make good progress in English in Years 3 to 6. Satisfactory teaching means that you make steady progress in the rest of the school and in other subjects. ♦
- You behave well, play together happily and respect each other's beliefs.
- You know who to turn to if you have a worry and feel that you are kept safe. We are pleased that you are so keen to take responsibility.
- All adults in school are caring and give you suitable help when you have problems with your work.
- Leaders are doing the right things to move the school forward and are clear about what still needs improving.

Your teachers know that there is still work to be done to make the school even better. We have suggested three things for the school to do that we think will help.

- Help you to do better in Years 1 and 2 by ensuring that teachers always provide the right level of challenge and that you have enough time to learn letter sounds and to read to an adult.
- Ensure that you get enough time to develop skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Check very carefully that all the things that leaders are doing to improve the school are having the desired effect and are being done well by all teachers.

We wish you all well for the future and are pleased that you enjoy school so much. You can help your teachers by trying to present your work neatly all of the time.

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper

Lead inspector

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