

Alexandra Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101586
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	355030
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Madeleine Gerard

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eric Allinson
Headteacher	Michelle Lewis
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 October 2007
School address	Kent House Road Beckenham BR3 1JG
Telephone number	020 8778 4714
Fax number	020 8778 3668
Email address	admin@alexandra-inf.bromley.sch.uk

Age group	4-7
Inspection date(s)	24–25 May 2011
Inspection number	355030

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011



Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent over eight hours observing learning in lessons or parts of lessons taught by seven teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at work in pupils' books, tracking data showing pupils' attainment and progress, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, and policies and records for safeguarding pupils. They considered the 74 responses to the questionnaire received from parents and carers, and the 22 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average infant school with a specialist unit that provides for a small number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in two Reception classes. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average. There is a slightly above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication needs or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. A small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language. Very few are at an early stage of learning English. The school has achieved a number of nationally recognised awards, including Artsmark Gold and the International Schools Award. The school has exceeded the government's floor targets for academic performance in each of the last three years.

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	1
Achievement	1
Teaching	1
Leadership and management	1
Behaviour and safety	1
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 thrive academically and personally in the school's caring and inclusive environment. The school works successfully to promote pupils' independence, strong social skills and very positive attitudes to learning.
- Teaching is excellent. Planning is astute and activities ensure pupils are challenged and enthused. Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children get off to an excellent start in the Reception classes. Progress through Years 1 and 2 is outstanding. Pupils' attainment in teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 is consistently high in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school works very effectively to meet the specific needs of all pupils. All groups of pupils, including pupils in the specialist unit, those who speak English as an additional language and pupils experiencing difficult circumstances, receive the additional help and guidance that they need in order to learn and progress extremely well.
- Leaders and managers at all levels, including members of the governing body, and the staff work very well together as a strong team. They have secured sustained enhancements to many aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection, including teaching, the curriculum and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Attendance has improved and is above average, although there remain a few persistent absences. In the survey, the very large majority of parents and carers confirmed that their children are happy at school and almost all agreed that their child feels safe at school. Pupils are very friendly and welcoming.

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

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent and pupils have a very clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance further by working with parents and carers to reduce the proportion of persistent absences from school.

Main report

The headteacher promotes clear direction and works successfully with other senior leaders, staff and the governing body to ensure all pupils are valued and enjoy their time at school. The school has worked with determination to successfully enhance the quality of its work and increase pupils' academic outcomes since the previous inspection. Rigorous self-evaluation has enabled the school's leaders to identify the most appropriate priorities and actions to secure enhancements in provision and outcomes for pupils. Consequently, leaders and managers embed ambition and bring about sustained improvement outstandingly well. Action taken to raise achievement includes improving the quality of teaching; expanding opportunities for pupils to write at length in a variety of different styles; and increasing provision for phonics (teaching letters and the sounds they make). The school has also successfully boosted attendance levels. The school's capacity to make even further improvements is outstanding. The governing body ensures that statutory duties are met and knows the school very well. Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous. Staff are well trained and have a detailed awareness of safeguarding issues.

Achievement through the school is outstanding. Children join the school with skills and capabilities that are generally below the expected levels for their age, although there is some variability from year to year. Communication, language and literacy and their personal, social and emotional development are often particularly weak. Opportunities for parents and carers to spend time each morning sharing activities with their children in the Reception classes ensure that children settle quickly and are happy. Staff work successfully to establish positive relationships and create an environment where children can grow in confidence and develop very good personal and social skills. Children take turns and share resources well. For example, children worked well together making a bird house using recycled materials and creating their own small world using construction blocks. Well-established routines ensure that no time is wasted and develop children's independence. An example of this was seen when children took responsibility for tidying resources away following group work, and sat together very quickly and sensibly on the carpet ready to listen to the teacher. Adults often extend children's learning effectively through discussion and questioning. They plan activities that promote children's curiosity and enable them to deepen their understanding. Children's knowledge of phonics is prioritised daily; during the inspection, children confidently practised their reading skills by sounding out groups of letters and miming actions that helped them to recall the letter sounds quickly. There is a very appropriate balance between adult-led tasks and

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

opportunities for children to choose activities independently in the inside and outside areas. Children's outcomes by the end of the Reception Year are extremely good in all areas of learning.

Pupils learn and progress outstandingly well in Years 1 and 2. This was illustrated in a series of literacy lessons where pupils were learning to write instructions. In preparation for writing their own instructions for a mathematics game, pupils worked hard to describe how they had designed and made pond life scenery for a short animated film about insects. Pupils made very rapid gains in their learning when they were given opportunities to discuss their ideas in pairs in order to work out for themselves how to make instructions clear. The teacher reviewed new learning at regular intervals. As a result, pupils confidently shared their instructions with the rest of the class and subsequently wrote clearly sequenced instructions during independent work. By age six, the very large majority of pupils have reached or exceeded the expected levels in reading. Attainment in teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 overall has risen since the previous inspection and is high in reading, writing and mathematics.

Equality is promoted and discrimination tackled very well so that attainment and rates of learning and progress have increased for all groups of pupils. Pupils whose starting points were much lower than those expected nationally are very rapidly closing the gap. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including children and pupils in the specialist unit, is very effective in ensuring they make outstanding progress. Extra help in lessons and additional sessions beyond the classroom ensure they keep up and learn very well. Personalised, specialist support from therapists and well-trained additional adults ensures that pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties receive the extra help and guidance that they need. Provision for pupils in the specialist unit is very well managed. It ensures they receive the individualised and carefully tailored support they require for high-quality learning. They benefit from joining mainstream classes for assembly. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language receive additional support in literacy skills so that they make very good gains in English and across all subjects.

The school has effective systems to check the progress pupils are making. Assessment information is reviewed regularly and used to plan work that is carefully matched to pupils' learning needs in lessons. Teachers ensure that explanations of new learning are clear. They use a wide variety of resources to engage pupils' interest and enable them to take an active part in lessons. For example, in a Reception class, children enthusiastically read words that were projected on the interactive whiteboard. They enjoyed taking turns to use the teacher's interactive whiteboard pen to circle around each word they read. Teachers manage classes very successfully and acknowledge pupils' efforts and contributions in class. As a result, pupils are very keen to contribute. When teachers mark pupils' work in books, they make clear how pupils can make it even better in order to progress to the next level in their work. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, detailed records of observations are kept. These are used to plan the next steps in children's learning and set each

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

child an individual learning target.

The excellent curriculum underpins pupils' extremely good rates of learning and progress in their basic skills. For example, children learn to write using joined-up handwriting in the Early Years Foundation Stage and systematically develop this skill in Years 1 and 2. As a result, pupils' handwriting is consistently painstaking and pupils take great pride in the neat presentation of their work. Topic themes bring the curriculum to life and have been very carefully planned to ensure pupils develop high levels of understanding in a wide range of different subjects. Links between subjects are used skilfully to enable pupils to practise and develop their literacy skills. For example, pupils in Year 2 have written books about India exploring differences and similarities between the lives of people in India and the lives of people in the United Kingdom. High-quality displays of pupils' artwork around the school illustrate the school's success in achieving the Artsmark Gold Award.

Behaviour and safety at the school are outstanding. In the survey, the overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded were confident that the standard of behaviour at the school is good. Pupils' behaviour makes a very positive contribution to learning in lessons and the calm and friendly atmosphere around the school. They feel extremely safe and are very confident that staff will help them, should any difficulties occur. Regular opportunities in class to discuss feelings and how to resolve any emerging problems ensure that the school takes active steps to keep pupils safe from bullying. Visits from the local emergency services and guidance on road safety and keeping safe when using computers ensure pupils are extremely clear about the steps they should take in order to keep themselves safe in a wide variety of situations. Through learning about cultures and festivals from a wide variety of faiths and communities, links with schools in Asia and Africa, and visitors from global communities, pupils have a very good understanding of world beliefs and values, as the International Schools Award reflects. Pupils have very caring attitudes towards one another and the extent of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Strategies have been introduced to promote regular attendance and good punctuality. These include a weekly competition between classes and individual certificates at the end of each term for the best attendance. Attendance is above average overall rather than high because there are a few persistent absences.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alexandra Infant 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 186 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	51	69	20	27	2	3	1	1
Q2 My child feels safe at school	51	69	22	30	1	1	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	33	45	30	41	10	14	0	0
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	31	42	33	45	8	11	0	0
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	40	54	32	43	2	3	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	31	42	36	49	4	5	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	32	43	39	53	2	3	0	0
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	27	36	35	47	7	9	0	0
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	26	35	28	38	4	5	2	3
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	40	54	23	31	10	14	0	0
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	30	41	28	38	11	15	3	4
Q12 The school is well led and managed	31	42	28	38	9	12	2	3

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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"> ■ The achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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.



26 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alexandra Infant School, Beckenham BR3 1JG

Thank you very much for your friendly welcome and for helping us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit very much and were pleased to see all your beautiful artwork on display around the school. We were delighted to see how very well you all get on together and how extremely well behaved you are in lessons and around the school. You also have a very good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe. This helps to make Alexandra Infant School such a happy place to be. I am writing to tell you about the judgements that we reached.

Alexandra Infant is an outstanding school. The youngest children get off to an excellent start in the Reception classes. You told us you like the interesting things that you get to learn about and all the activities that the staff organise for you. You make outstanding progress in your reading, writing and mathematics and reach high standards by the end of Year 2. Those of you who need extra help are very well supported so that you make outstanding progress. All the staff work together as a team to look after you very well.

We can see that the adults who run your school want to carry on making it better and better. Your attendance is above average but we would like it to be even higher. We have asked the school to work even more closely with your parents and carers to ensure each of you comes to school every day unless you are really ill, so that you do not miss valuable learning.

Finally, I would like to thank you again and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**