

# Alexandra Junior School

Cator Road, Sydenham, London, SE26 5DS

**Inspection dates** 15–16 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well and has made many changes since her appointment that have improved the school since the previous inspection.
- Teaching and learning are good and some teaching is outstanding. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils that help pupils learn well.
- As a result, progress has improved and pupils achieve well, so by the time they leave most pupils reach the expected level of attainment for their age in English and the large majority do so in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to others.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They have very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school, as shown by their improved and high attendance.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, that there is no bullying and all pupils are treated fairly.
- Leaders and managers have high expectations of pupils and staff. Regular and thorough checks are made on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Leaders quickly identify and support any teaching that does not meet their high expectations.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and feel their children are happy and well looked after.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching. The work that teachers set is not always challenging enough for some pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Standards are not yet high enough, especially in mathematics, which are weaker than in English.
- In a few lessons, pupils do not have time to complete the higher-level work that teachers plan because they all start at the same point, whatever their ability.
- On occasion, teachers spend too long talking at the start of lessons and so pupils do not have enough time to work independently.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or part lessons including some joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made shorter visits to classes and talked to pupils about reading as well as listening to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, staff with key leadership responsibilities, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, records of pupils' progress and attainment, and the safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors took account of 52 responses to the online Parent View survey as well as the school's own parents' questionnaire, letters written to the inspectors, and discussions with some parents and carers, as well as 22 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

## Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Jim McVeigh

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The next largest groups are from mixed White and Black Caribbean, Black African or Black Caribbean heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium), because they are known to be eligible for free school meals, is a little above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher was appointed in the summer of 2011.

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

- Ensure pupils make the progress of which they are capable and improve their attainment, particularly in mathematics, increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - making sure that teachers provide more demanding work, especially for those pupils who are more able, and give them time to do it
  - giving pupils enough opportunity to work as independent learners by not taking up too much of the lesson in explanation by the teacher.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment is broadly average. Standards dipped in English and mathematics after the last inspection but then improved rapidly because of much better teaching. Pupils are making good and improving progress.
- In English, attainment in reading is a particular strength and stronger than in writing, with the proportion reaching the expected level by the end of Year 6 above that found nationally. Mathematics remains the relatively weaker subject, although, like English, attainment is improving at a faster rate than nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was slightly above average in the 2012 national tests in reading and writing, but in mathematics the proportion was below average.
- Pupils' work and the school's records of progress show that, in almost all classes, pupils are making more than the expected progress and are on track to reach challenging targets. In writing, previous gaps between boys' and girls' achievement are narrowing. Teachers ensure that writing tasks appeal equally to boys and girls.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs usually make similar progress to others. Effective support is provided and progress is rigorously tracked.
- Gaps in attainment between pupils who are supported by additional funding (the pupil premium) and others in the school are narrowing. The school uses the additional resources effectively, for example to provide additional adult support in class and participation in a mathematics project for pupils in Year 5 in partnership with local schools. This support has enabled pupils to make accelerated progress.
- The school promotes reading for enjoyment well. Year 6 pupils are proud of their role in running the reading club where they read stories to younger pupils and listen to them read. Older, higher-attaining readers are confident and fluent. They can express preferences for authors and styles of writing, and feel the school has a good selection of books to choose from. They use skills such as inference and deduction to help them understand the deeper meaning of texts. Some less-able readers of all ages do not always have secure phonic knowledge (linking letters to the sounds they make) and so struggle with unfamiliar words or are not confident enough to try.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are skilled in asking searching questions that make pupils think. For example, Year 4 pupils were concentrating on writing good openings for each paragraph in their creative writing, and the teacher's use of questioning, as well as visual stimulus and opportunities to share their ideas and opinions, helped them think very carefully about their own writing and make excellent progress.
- Pupils and most parents and carers agree with inspectors that teaching is good. Pupils appreciate the changes in the school and say that learning is 'more fun and we are more independent'.
- In all lessons, there are good relationships between adults and pupils that support good learning.
- In lessons where there is appropriate challenge and teachers move learning forward at a brisk pace, pupils stay engaged, enjoy learning and make good progress. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils responded well to a timer displayed on the interactive whiteboard so they worked at a pace to meet the 'deadline'. In a mathematics lesson, pupils solved problems using improper fractions and mixed numbers. Again, a good pace, and problems that related to the real world, made learning meaningful and pupils made good progress.
- In a few lessons where teachers talk for too long before pupils can start their independent work, they lose concentration, which slows their progress.

- Teachers ensure that pupils know their targets for learning, and good marking and feedback means that pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve their work.
- Teachers plan additional activities to challenge pupils. However, on occasion, pupils of all abilities start from the same point in lessons and some, especially more-able pupils, do not always have time to get on to the harder, higher-level work, which hinders the progress they make.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils live up to, and effectively promote, the school motto of 'ARC', achieve, respect and care.
- They enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes to learning, which is reflected in their high attendance. All parents and carers who responded feel that their children are happy at school and behave well. Pupils expressed maturely how they appreciated the changes in the school, commenting on the different activities, fun, and their confidence and trust in the headteacher. A group agreed that, 'She always has a smile on her face, she brightens our day.'
- Good behaviour and positive attitudes make a considerable contribution to the good progress pupils make. Inspectors agree that pupils usually behave well in lessons and around the school, and school records show that this is typical. In a few lessons, however, where teaching does not fully engage pupils, some become distracted and inattentive, and this slows the progress they make.
- All agree pupils feel safe in school. In discussions, pupils say there is no bullying, only that occasionally, pupils fall out and, when this happens, they are encouraged to 'sort things out for themselves'. They have, however, a good awareness that bullying can take different forms, including cyber-bullying and prejudiced-based bullying. They said they are very confident that if any problems were to arise, staff would deal with them quickly and fairly.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and well mannered, and show care and consideration for each other in lessons and at playtimes. They enjoy the responsibilities they are given.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher is a highly effective and inspirational leader. High expectations for teaching, learning and achievement have led to rapidly improving progress being made across year groups, but particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- The majority of teachers and leaders are relatively new to the school and some are still developing their roles. The headteacher has, however, quickly built a strong team of staff who share her ambition and determination to provide the best possible learning experiences and outcomes for pupils. She has the confidence of staff who are proud of the school. A typical comment from one teacher reflects this: 'Since she took over as headteacher, the school has dramatically improved. Not only have standards risen, but she has taken time and interest in my own professional development. I really enjoy teaching at this school and I'm proud to be a staff member here.' Parents and carers also agree the school is well led and managed.
- Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, are very clear about the school's strengths and what it needs to do next. There was a marked improvement in attainment in 2012 from the previous year, particularly in English, and the school is very clear and relentless in its work to further raise standards. Although some inconsistencies remain in the attainment of different groups, gaps are narrowing and attainment is improving at a faster rate than nationally because of the raised expectations and determined and effective action of the headteacher and governors.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher observe lessons to check on the quality of teaching and identify areas for improvement. All teachers know they are accountable for pupils' progress and that, in follow-up observations, they will be expected to demonstrate improvement.
- Training is organised for all staff to further develop skills and subject knowledge, and newly qualified teachers are given good guidance and support from leaders and more experienced

colleagues. Staff have worked together to successfully improve progress in writing and mathematics, and improve their understanding and use of data to support teaching and learning.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well through the curriculum, extra activities and the school's ethos of valuing everyone's opinion and beliefs, and making sure that there are equal opportunities for all. The curriculum gives appropriate emphasis to learning basic skills and good opportunities for pupils to apply their skills across different subjects, although this is more established in English than in mathematics.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements, are effective and are well known and implemented by all staff to ensure that pupils are safe in school.
- The local authority supports the school well, for example in providing support for pupils' achievement in mathematics and working with the headteacher to secure improved teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body knows the school's strengths and areas for development well. It is fully committed to improving the school, demonstrated well through setting up a school improvement committee that checks how well the school improves progress for all groups of pupils and is narrowing the gap between the achievement of different groups. Governors have a clear understanding of the data that show how well the school is doing compared to similar schools. They challenge as well as support school leaders and hold them to account for pupils' achievement. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching throughout the school and, with the headteacher, check that the performance of teachers is closely linked to pupils' progress and reflected in the salary structure. The governing body agrees how the pupil premium funding is spent, for example by employing more teaching assistants to provide additional support, and successfully monitors the impact of the spending decisions. Governors are taking positive action to be more accessible and known by parents and carers.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101585
<b>Local authority</b>	Bromley
<b>Inspection number</b>	400491

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	232
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Guy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Claudette Maragh
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9–10 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8778 3961
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