

# Alpha Preparatory School

89. Vallentin Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 3JJ

## Inspection dates

2–3 July 2013

### Overall effectiveness

**Adequate 3**

Pupils' achievement	Adequate	3
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Adequate	3
Quality of curriculum	Adequate	3
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Adequate	3

## Summary of key findings

### This school is adequate because

- Achievement is adequate and children are not making consistently good progress. Children make adequate progress in their early literacy and numeracy skills.
- Teaching and learning have some strengths but are not yet enabling children to achieve well over time.
- The curriculum delivery does not offer a wide enough range of learning activities that inspire children to learn at an accelerated rate.
- The school has not yet established rigorous procedures for tracking the academic performance of older pupils which the school plans to enrol in the near future.
- Although the headteacher has made notable improvements since previous inspections, procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are not yet having the best possible impact on children's achievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and staff are committed in the longer term to providing a good quality of education for all children that learn at the school.
- There is a good team spirit among the staff and all help to create a learning environment where children behave well and feel valued members of the school community.
- The safety, well-being and welfare of children are afforded a high priority and relationships between adults and children are strong.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- The school was inspected with a day's notice.
- The inspector observed four lessons or parts of lessons. Samples of children's work were scrutinised. The inspector looked at a wide range of school documents relating to children's achievement, the curriculum, teaching, safeguarding and leadership and management.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior staff and external consultants; informal discussions were held with children.
- The small number of children attending the school means that there were insufficient responses on Parent View to analyse parental perceptions of the school. The inspector evaluated the four responses from the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Martin Newell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Alpha Preparatory School opened in September 2012. It is located in a church in Walthamstow in East London.
- The school was registered in 2012 and is currently allowed to admit up to 40 pupils aged three to 11 years of age. It currently has two Reception aged children on roll, although the Reception class also includes three of the older children from a Nursery which is located on site.
- The Nursery is subject to separate inspection and so was not inspected on this occasion.
- Children at the school are from different ethnic minority backgrounds. None of the children currently attending is at an early stage of acquiring English and no child has a statement of special educational needs. The school does not make use of any alternative provision. The school provides a before- and after-school club for children.
- The school aims to provide an education based on strong Christian morals and values and to transform 'learners today into leaders tomorrow'.
- This is the school's first full inspection.

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

- Improve teaching so that children learn and achieve well over time by:
  - making sure that planned learning activities are vibrant and exciting and consistently challenge children of differing abilities
  - ensuring that learning moves at a swift pace and keeps children enthused and engaged
  - regularly using questioning techniques that encourage children to provide extended answers and to use a more descriptive vocabulary
  - utilising strategies for marking and commenting on children's work that help them recognise where they have gone wrong and what they need to do to improve.
- Further improve the strategies and procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching by:
  - using information about children's progress and samples of children's work, alongside lesson observations, to rigorously evaluate the quality of teaching over time and to hold teachers accountable for the progress of children they teach
  - identifying very clearly what needs to be improved in teaching and use the information as a focus for future evaluations in holding teachers to account for their performance.
- In preparation for additional and older pupils attending the school, introduce rigorous procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress, for setting challenging targets and carefully monitoring pupils' success in hitting their targets.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

#### Adequate

Children's achievement is adequate. This is because of adequate teaching and an adequate curriculum. Evidence from lesson observations, assessment data and children's work clearly indicates that children are making the expected progress from their differing starting points. There is an appropriate emphasis given to the development of early literacy and mathematical skills. There is a structured approach to the teaching of phonics (the links between letters and sounds). Progress is not good because teaching over time is not yet effective and vibrant enough to ensure that children learn at a more accelerated pace. All the areas of learning are covered adequately and, as a result, children benefit from a broad range of learning experiences. Opportunities are provided for children to utilise the outside play area and this enables them to develop their physical skills satisfactorily. When questioning is used skilfully and expectations are high, as observed in a session about mini-beasts, there is an immediate improvement in children's responses and the vocabulary used. Conversely, learning tasks are not always challenging enough and progress is sometimes slower because the teacher's emphasis is on consolidating rather than extending learning. Evidence of this was observed in a counting activity when children's skills were not extended enough. Progress in children's personal and social development is, at times, good because a strong emphasis is given to children taking turns, helping one another out and showing respect to each other and to adults. The children readily respond to these expectations. The school recognises that improvements in teaching are required to ensure that good progress is the norm across all areas of learning.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

#### Good

Children's behaviour and personal development are good. Children generally behave well in class, around the school and at the before- and after-school clubs. They talk about their own and others' behaviour and its consequences and know that some forms of behaviour are unacceptable. Children demonstrate good levels of confidence and self-esteem and are always ready to try new activities. In discussion, they readily talk about their ideas, although on occasion they do not listen as attentively as they could to the contributions of others. Children work well together and are able to work independently when asked. They know and follow the class rules and take changes in routines in their stride. When engaged in learning activities, they share resources, take turns and show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings. Good provision is made for children to develop a moral and social awareness appropriate to their ages. The school has a strong Christian code that permeates learning, but opportunities are also provided for children to learn about different faiths, traditions and cultures. A sense of awe and wonder is promoted through children's learning about the environment and the wider world in which the children live. All these factors contribute well to children's good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Discussions with children indicate that they enjoy coming to school and learning. This enjoyment is reflected in their attendance rates. Children feel safe and secure at school and say that there is no bullying and that adults always help them when they have any concerns or worries. Planning indicates that good provision is made for children to learn about relationships, families, communities and how these function in everyday British life. The school ensures that this provision is delivered without political or any other bias.

### Quality of teaching

#### Adequate

The quality of teaching is adequate. Although teaching has some strengths, it is not consistently good to ensure that children make good and better than expected progress.

Relationships between adults and children are good and this helps to create an atmosphere that is

conducive to learning. Children's behaviour is managed well and this helps to ensure that learning is seldom interrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Lots of opportunities are provided for discussion, but at times the level of questioning is not at a high enough level to develop children's speaking and listening skills and to promote more extended answers. Planning is appropriate and identifies activities to extend children's learning. In practice, however, learning activities in the classroom are not always challenging enough, with an emphasis on consolidation rather than vibrant and demanding activities that will extend children's thinking and learning. When activities are more challenging and questioning is sharp and incisive, the pace of learning immediately increases; children are more engrossed in their learning, use a higher level of vocabulary and show disappointment when the activity comes to an end. These features are not yet consistent in teaching over time.

As well as giving appropriate emphasis to the development of early language and mathematical skills, the other areas of learning are covered adequately and effective use is made of the outdoor play area. Reading skills are taught in an adequate manner and this ensures that children make expected progress. The school has improved its procedures for assessing and tracking Reception children's progress over time. On-going assessments of children's achievement are carried out on a regular basis. The school recognises that it needs to have more rigorous procedures in place for setting targets and tracking pupils' progress in preparation for older pupils starting at the school. A start has already been made, but this remains work in progress.

### Quality of curriculum

### Adequate

The curriculum is adequate in meeting children's needs but is not vibrant and challenging enough to ensure that good progress is the norm. The curriculum for Reception-aged children is based firmly on the early learning goals of the Early Years Foundation Stage and all areas of learning are covered in appropriate depth. Phonics teaching is provided on a regular basis and opportunities are provided for children to learn French. The outdoor play area is regularly used and provides ample opportunities for children to be physically active, playing on equipment and with wheeled toys. The school is eager to introduce children to the wider world and makes good use of the local community and parks for children to learn about the environment, services and transportation. Children have also visited a local zoo and participated in a trip to the seaside. Visitors to the school include an expert on mini-beasts, sports teachers and dance groups. Support is on hand, when needed, to support children with learning difficulties and any child at an early stage of acquiring English.

At present there are only Reception-aged children attending the school. However, planning is securely in place to provide appropriate curriculum provision that covers all areas of the National Curriculum, and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Plans are also in place to provide specialist teaching in music, information and communication technology (ICT), French, Latin and drama and dance.

### Pupils' welfare, health and safety

### Good

The provision for children's welfare, health and safety is good and all of the independent school regulations for welfare are met. Children feel safe and happy at school and the good relationships and respect between adults and children mean that children feel valued and have confidence to ask any adult for help if they need it, whether it be academically or socially. The school has put a lot of effort into ensuring that children's welfare, safety and well-being is given a consistently high priority and fully meet the Early Years Foundation Stage welfare requirements. Procedures for safeguarding are robust. All staff working with children have been subject to stringent checks and these are all recorded appropriately in the single central record. Child protection procedures are equally robust. The designated child protection officer has attended high-level training and all staff

have attended appropriate levels of training. This training is updated on a regular basis. Good policies are in place to promote positive behaviour and to prevent any form of bullying taking place. These policies are consistently applied by all staff. The school has first aiders who regularly attend training to keep their skills up to date. The school carries out detailed and regular risk assessments of the premises and any issues are dealt with swiftly. Equally detailed risk assessments are carried out when children go on visits away from the school site. Fire risk assessments fully meet requirements and checks relating to electrical appliances are carried out by qualified contractors. The supervision of children is good.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Adequate**

Leadership and management are adequate. The headteacher has played an instrumental and pivotal role in establishing the school. During the last 14 months the headteacher and other school leaders have been highly effective at putting in place policies and procedures to ensure that the school now meets all the required regulations for independent schools. There is a strong team spirit at the school and a genuine and shared commitment to make this a good school.

The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has a vision and a fervent desire to make excellence in education the right of each and every child. She is also a realist and recognises that there is still work to be done to enable this vision to become a reality. The school has a long-term strategic plan to bring this vision to life, but it is not yet fully in place. The school is utilising outside consultants to help improve teaching and the overall quality of education for all children.

The school is working hard to promote an equality of opportunity for all children and recognises that there must be a consistently high level of challenge for all children so that all will achieve as well as they can. Procedures have recently been put in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and performance management structures are in the process of being implemented. However, the analysis of children's work and assessment data, alongside classroom observations, is not yet well established as a strategy to bring about more rapid and sustained improvements in teaching. Good opportunities are provided for staff to attend professional training. These opportunities are tailored well to meet both the needs of the individual and the school.

The school provides the required information for parents and carers through its prospectus, website and regular newsletters. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their child's progress. Procedures for dealing with complaints fully meet requirements. The school has put much time, effort and finance into improving the accommodation, which also meets requirements. Classrooms are bright, spacious and well decorated and the school is well resourced and secure.

The proprietor has ensured that all independent school regulations are met.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138669
<b>Inspection number</b>	420267
<b>DfE registration number</b>	320/6003

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Faith School (Christian)
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	2
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Reverend Dunni Odetoyinbo
<b>Chair</b>	Not applicable
<b>Headteacher</b>	Reverend Dunni Odetoyinbo
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	First inspection
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£5,096
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 521 2071
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