

Admiral Lord Nelson School

Dundas Lane, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO3 5XT

Inspection dates

8–9 March 2017

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have taken rapid action to tackle the dip in pupils' progress seen in 2016. As a result, current pupils are achieving well across the school.
- Vulnerable pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching has improved rapidly because leaders at all levels have made good use of guidance and advice. As a result, staff are well supported to improve their practice.
- Leaders make very good use of achievement information to check on the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. Consequently, those pupils who need extra help receive additional support and catch up quickly.
- The membership of the local governing body has changed considerably since the school became part of a multi-academy trust. Governors are not yet scrutinising the work of leaders in enough depth.
- Pupils appreciate the extensive range of additional activities, trips and visits. In some cases, such as the school play, pupils organise and lead the activities themselves.
- Pupils enjoy school. They are proud of the school and they model the values of respect and responsibility well. Pupils feel well supported and safe.
- In the past, the curriculum did not meet all of the pupils' needs. Leaders have introduced a new curriculum this year that is now more suitable and meets pupils' needs more closely.
- In a minority of subjects, including mathematics, teaching does not challenge the most able pupils effectively. As a result, these pupils make less progress than in other subjects.
- Leaders have refreshed and updated their approach to supporting pupils who are disadvantaged. Consequently, these pupils are now achieving well and in some cases making more progress than their peers.
- Parents are positive about the school, especially the support for pupils who struggle to settle in or who have had less positive experiences of education elsewhere.
- The support from the multi-academy trust is developing. However, there remains a lack of clarity over the exact role trustees have in holding leaders to account.
- Pupils make a very positive contribution to their community. They raise money for local and national charities as well as sponsoring two schools in The Gambia.
- There are increasingly effective links with the other schools in the trust and local schools. As a result, leaders benefit from the additional expertise available to them.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of the most able pupils' learning, especially in mathematics and design technology by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use information about pupils' starting points more effectively to plan learning that tests and stretches these pupils
 - make better use of the new curriculum assessment criteria so that programmes of study include greater opportunities for pupils to attain the highest grades.
- Refine the capacity of the local governing body to scrutinise leaders' work, by:
 - clarifying the different responsibilities of the multi-academy trust board and the local governing body in reviewing the work of leaders
 - improving the quality of information presented to governors and directors of the trust
 - developing the expertise and skills of governors and trustees new to their roles.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and her leaders are ambitious for all the pupils to achieve well. They are committed to providing a high-quality education as well as a caring and emotionally supportive environment. Leaders recognised that historical weaknesses in the school needed urgent attention and took difficult decisions to improve provision. As a result, staff, parents and pupils are positive about the leadership of the school with one parent commenting that, 'leaders are incredibly committed', and pupils reporting that, 'leaders go the extra mile'.
- Leaders know the school well. They have a good grasp of the fine detail of the work of the school so that their self-evaluation is accurate. Subject leaders and senior leaders work closely together to generate strategies to drive improvement.
- The leadership of teaching is very effective with well-organised and well-managed systems. Leaders have an accurate assessment of the strengths in teaching. Leaders are clear-eyed about aspects of teaching that need further development and ensure that there is a comprehensive programme of support for staff. Those new to the profession are especially effusive about the depth and breadth of the help they receive to improve their practice.
- Leaders at all levels use achievement information well to review the impact of their work. Individual teachers are held to account more frequently for the performance of their pupils by subject leaders. Senior leaders are now more consistent in how they challenge middle leaders. As a result, the systems to manage performance are increasingly robust with a more formal approach to reward pay to those who merit an increase.
- The curriculum in the past did not meet the needs of all pupils well. As a result, leaders have taken decisive action to address this. Following a comprehensive review, a more appropriate and balanced curriculum is now in place. Pupils are now able to make choices in Year 9 that better suit their interests and GCSE aspirations. Consequently, there are more opportunities to study a wider range of courses, including vocational options that more productively prepare pupils for possible careers. The school has had significant success in gaining recognition for its arts curriculum, which is very highly regarded.
- The wider curriculum is lively and interesting. All subjects include opportunities for pupils to develop awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. There is an extensive personal development programme which effectively develops pupils' knowledge of the diversity of life in modern Britain. Consequently, pupils express respect for different cultures and have a good understanding of the wider world beyond their close community.
- Although published information does not show the differences in attainment diminishing, the provision and support for disadvantaged pupils currently in the school is improving considerably. Following an external review of the use of pupil premium funding in 2016, leaders ensure that support is closely targeted to the needs of individual pupils. The funding is also used increasingly effectively to develop middle leaders' and teachers' expertise in supporting these pupils with their learning. Evidence

from books and current achievement information shows that these pupils, especially in key stage 3, are making good progress from their starting points. In addition, key stage 4 pupils report that funding is used well to support them learning at home and after school hours, so they are now more confident about their upcoming examinations.

- Pupils receive good advice and guidance to prepare them for their futures. There is a very well developed programme that starts in Year 7, including visits from local and regional businesses. Pupils are well informed about the opportunities available to them at age 16, are well prepared for the application process and are knowledgeable about the different kinds of courses open to them. As a result, there is an increase in the number of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, going on to further education or employment than in the past. A tiny minority, below the national average, are not in education, employment or training.
- The Year 7 catch-up premium is used effectively. Pupils who arrive with lower-than-average attainment catch up quickly because leaders provide effective support. They receive additional tuition and targeted support for reading as well as additional help with numeracy.
- Leaders have strong links with other local schools and with the local area. There are good links with the local authority which shows considerable confidence in the school by placing a significant number of vulnerable pupils in the school. The leadership of inclusion is especially effective because vulnerable pupils are well supported and succeed, including those who have not been successful in other schools. Leaders have also established good provision for those at risk of exclusion so that no pupils are permanently excluded. The vast majority of pupils who are identified as being at risk re-engage in their learning and go onto further education or employment.
- Support from the multi-academy trust is improving. There is a growing strength in the joint work across both schools, for example in improving teaching and learning in computing and information technology. The executive headteacher is now better placed to support the development of the trust and is engaged in reviewing how the multi-academy trust challenges and supports the local governing body and leaders more scrupulously.

Governance of the school

- The governors have a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Some governors are relatively new to their roles and although they have appropriate expertise, they are still finding their feet. Governors regularly visit the school and check the work of leaders as well as scrutinising achievement information in their formal meetings. Governors oversee the achievement of specific groups carefully and are well aware of the differences between disadvantaged pupils' progress and others.
- Governors exercise appropriate oversight of the systems to reward pay and performance. They acknowledge that, in the past, leaders' appraisals lacked rigour. As a result, they have commissioned external support this academic year to strengthen their review of the system to reward pay and performance.
- Governors have undertaken training, including safeguarding training, to develop their expertise. However, the quality of governors' challenge to leaders, especially in formal

settings, lacks depth. Leaders acknowledge that some of the documentation used by governors needs further refining so that governors have greater clarity in measuring the impact of leaders' work.

- Trustees are highly committed to the school and increasingly know the school well. However, they recognise that further work remains to review the current arrangements of governance to provide greater clarity over which duties remain with the governors or lie with the trust board.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are very good systems in place to secure the well-being and safety of pupils. Staff with additional responsibilities are appropriately trained and there are regular updates for all staff throughout the year. Leaders work well with external agencies and are dogged in their pursuit of the best support for those families who, from time to time, require extra help.
- Trustees and governors make regular checks on the school's policies. They regularly visit and ensure that the required employment checks are made. Staff new to the school receive high-quality induction and training so all staff know what to do and how to react swiftly to any concerns.
- Parents report that their children are safe and well looked after. One parent of a vulnerable pupil commented that, 'the school has been outstanding in their support'. Pupils feel safe and have confidence in the adults in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is rapidly improving across the school. This is especially the case in subjects with weaker historical performance such as science. The vast majority of teachers report that the school has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers are committed and proud to work in the school. The overwhelming majority feel well supported and appreciated by school leaders. In the best lessons there is a fizz and excitement about learning.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge well. For example, in key stage 4 computing lessons pupils learn new skills using game-based learning. In key stage 3 language lessons pupils are highly engaged and motivated because teachers use materials that excite and stimulate them. Where teaching is less effective, teachers plan activities that are too easy for pupils. For example, in design technology lessons the most able pupils find the work easy and do not make enough progress.
- The teaching of English is very effective. Teachers know their pupils well and plan carefully so that pupils make good progress from their starting points. Teachers have increased the level of challenge in the English curriculum by introducing more difficult materials into lessons. For example, Year 9 pupils tackled the Ted Hughes poem 'Wind' with vim and gusto, identifying and explaining the language devices and techniques in depth.
- Teachers use the school assessment policy adroitly. Pupils make good use of the advice and guidance they receive. The vast majority improve their work and value the

feedback they receive.

- The quality of teaching in mathematics requires further attention. Pupils develop good understanding of basic skills and concepts but do not have many opportunities to apply these to real-world problems. The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in mathematics as there is not enough emphasis on developing reasoning or problem solving.
- Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive increasingly effective support. There are good systems in place to share those strategies which work best. Additional adults work well in classrooms, prompting and guiding these pupils in their work. For example, in history pupils were well supported to complete a challenging task on analysing the Treaty of Versailles. If pupils fall behind, they receive additional help quickly so that they can catch up.
- Improving literacy is a key focus for the school. Teachers promote subject-specific language well across a wide range of subjects. For example, pupils used technical language to discuss sleep disorders in psychology and coastal management in geography. There is also a whole-school drive to improve reading, especially in key stage 3, with teachers using a shared approach to improve pupils' reading skills. Teachers also make good use of examples of writing to help pupils develop their technical skills.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported well. Teachers skilfully reshape tasks to suit these pupils' different starting points during the lessons. Teachers prioritise feedback for these pupils and check carefully that they understand key concepts. Teachers make good use of targeted questioning to probe and encourage these pupils to think deeply. As a result, disadvantaged pupils currently in school do well and, in some cases, make more progress than their peers.
- Parents are positive about the quality of teaching and the updates they receive about their child's progress. They comment favourably on the increase in homework set and the information they receive to support learning at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- There is a strong current of mutual regard and cooperation that runs through the school. Pupils talk confidently about the 'rights, respect and responsibilities' charter that all members of the school community follow. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils show care and compassion for each other.
- Pupils enjoy the many opportunities they have to develop their leadership skills; these include directing the school play, and acting as Rights Respecting School ambassadors and as student council members or prefects.
- Leaders are committed to raising aspirations of all the pupils in the school. There is an extensive range of activities for every year group in the school, including visits and talks. Pupils report that they are well prepared for the next stage of education, training

or employment.

- Pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe, including how to manage online risks. For example, they outline confidently the steps to take to ensure that their social media profile is secure. Pupils understand the dangers of grooming and child sexual exploitation because there is robust discussion of this in the personal development programme.
- Attendance is improving and is now close to the national average. There are good systems to monitor and track attendance and those groups of pupils who attended less well in the past now attend more frequently.
- Leaders track behaviour effectively. There is a well-understood set of rules about conduct that pupils follow. Leaders have taken steps to improve the quality of alternative provision for pupils in the school who need extra support and intervention to improve their behaviour. Fewer pupils are excluded than in the past because leaders use exclusion sparingly and as a result, the number of exclusions is below the national average.
- Pupils feel safe in school and they feel well cared for. A high proportion of parents agree that their children are looked after well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils concentrate and do their best in the vast majority of lessons. There are few occasions when they lose focus and do not try their hardest. Increasingly, pupils take pride in their work and as a result the quality of presentation is improving. Pupils understand and follow the very clear systems to tackle poor learning behaviour.
- Admiral Lord Nelson pupils know that it is vital that they learn from their mistakes. Most pupils improve their work in their books and correct aspects that they got wrong in the first instance. In many lessons, pupils show resilience when faced with challenging tasks. They do not give up easily.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the building. They take pride in their uniform and take care of their environment. Pupils welcome visitors and are keen to share their views of their school.
- Bullying is rare. Pupils say that it is limited to small numbers of pupils and tends to be about comments made on social media. The vast majority of pupils are confident to share concerns with staff, especially their tutors. Pupils report that on the whole, staff manage these situations well and resolve the issues raised effectively.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In the past, pupils have attained well in the majority of subjects, and in many cases their attainment was above the national average at the end of key stage 4. However, in 2016 in the majority of subjects pupils made less progress than similar pupils nationally. This was especially the case for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have taken urgent action to address this and current information shows that

both attainment and progress are improving rapidly. Leaders have established a more ambitious system to set targets and assess pupils' progress. They have increased the amount and quality of checks on assessment across all subjects.

- In English, pupils achieved well in 2016 and continue to make strong progress. This is due to consistently strong teaching, with effective support and intervention for those who need to catch up. The assessment of pupils' work is moderated with other local schools so that leaders are confident about the accuracy of the information on current progress in English.
- Outcomes in mathematics in 2016 were above the national average for attainment. However, pupils made less progress from their starting points than pupils nationally. This was especially the case for boys. Leaders have taken rigorous action to address this. As a result, current information shows that many pupils, but especially boys, are making better progress towards their challenging targets. Work seen in books shows that pupils are gaining a good understanding of calculations and concepts. However, current indicators show that the most able in some year groups are making less progress in mathematics than expected.
- Pupils' progress in science is increasing rapidly. Work in books and assessment information show that the improvements in teaching are leading to higher levels of attainment and progress. This is especially the case for pupils studying additional science where current information shows that pupils are on track to achieve much improved standards than in the past.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are increasingly doing well. The vast majority of pupils in key stage 3 are on track to reach the ambitious targets set for them. The quality of support and intervention for these pupils is also improving outcomes in key stage 4 but at a less rapid rate.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is a high priority for leaders. In the past, these pupils have not made as strong progress as similar pupils nationally. The current indicators from a majority of subjects show that more of the most able pupils are on track to achieve the highest grades. However, in mathematics and design technology subjects this is not the case.
- Disadvantaged pupils are increasingly doing well. In the past, disadvantaged pupils' attainment increased but they made less progress than expected – in fact, well below the national average across many subjects. However, disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making much stronger progress. Across a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics, the improved support and intervention is making a significant impact so that these pupils make accelerated progress from their starting points.
- The majority of pupils read widely and confidently. Leaders have focused rightly on improving the reading skills of pupils, especially in key stage 3. As a consequence, pupils are now well prepared for the greater demands made of them in the new key stage 4 curriculum.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 140697 |
| Local authority | Portsmouth |
| Inspection number | 10024538 |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Secondary comprehensive |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 994 |
| Appropriate authority | Academy trust |
| Chair | Mrs Tania Osborne |
| Headteacher | Mrs Nys Hardingham |
| Telephone number | 02392 364536 |
| Website | www.alns.co.uk |
| Email address | admin@alns.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- Admiral Lord Nelson School is an average-sized secondary school.
- The school converted to an academy in April 2014. In April 2015, the school joined the Saltern's Academy Trust.
- The vast majority of pupils are white British.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium funding is just below the national average. There is a higher proportion in the school of children looked after than is found in other schools.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is just above the national average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with staff, including newly qualified teachers, leaders and governors. The inspectors also spoke to the executive headteacher of the multi-academy trust and the deputy director of children’s services.
- Inspectors visited 40 classes across all subjects and year groups in the school as well as 13 part lessons in science, art, drama, music and humanities. The inspectors looked at books in lessons, including those of pupils who are disadvantaged or are high achieving.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally at breaktime and reviewed the 100 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey. There were also meetings held with different groups of pupils from a variety of year groups, including pupil leaders, disadvantaged pupils, and the most able.
- Inspectors, alongside leaders, scrutinised a range of mathematics workbooks of Year 10 boys including those of disadvantaged pupils.
- Inspectors analysed the 92 responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, as well as the 58 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- Inspectors checked records and documentation relating to safeguarding, behaviour, and minutes of meetings, staff appraisal, monitoring and self-evaluation.

Inspection team

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| Seamus Murphy, lead inspector | Her Majesty’s Inspector |
| Ben Ramdhony | Ofsted Inspector |
| Nicholas Simmonds | Ofsted Inspector |
| Alistair Brien | Ofsted Inspector |
| Gerard Strong | Ofsted Inspector |
| Taj Bhambra | Ofsted Inspector |

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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