

# The Alderton Junior School

Alderton Hall Lane, Loughton, Essex IG10 3HE

## Inspection dates

21–22 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leaders and governors have not ensured that the school continues to provide a good standard of education.
- The proportion of pupils leaving Year 6 having achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics has been below the national average for the last two years.
- Pupils' progress is not as good as it should be. This is because teachers do not adapt the learning well enough to match the needs of pupils.
- Progress in mathematics is slower than in English. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Not all teachers have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Some teachers do not intervene quickly enough in lessons. Pupils have to wait too long before receiving further challenge. This results in pupils making slower progress over time and spending time off task in lessons.
- Leaders do not ensure that the good teaching practice that exists is shared well enough across the school.
- Middle leaders are not evaluating their effectiveness in sufficient detail. They are not clear about their impact on the progress that different groups of pupils make.
- The proportion of pupils persistently absent from school is above average. Attendance is below the national average.

### The school has the following strengths

- In 2017, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in writing was in line with that nationally. Standards in reading are improving.
- A strengthened leadership team is having a positive impact on school standards.
- The school is a safe environment and pupils feel safe.
- Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum which makes good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes are leading to improved outcomes for pupils currently in the school.

## Full report

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

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment in order to accelerate pupils' progress across all subjects by:
  - teachers more precisely matching the learning task to the needs of pupils
  - teachers more rapidly checking pupils' understanding in lessons to swiftly move their learning on
  - sharing the existing good practice in the school in order to achieve a consistency of teaching across all classes.
- Improve outcomes in mathematics by:
  - ensuring that teachers provide work that is more challenging, especially for the most able pupils
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- Improve pupils' overall attendance and reduce persistent absence so that it is at least in line with the national average.
- Improve the effectiveness of middle leaders by ensuring that they are more precise in measuring the impact of their actions on the achievement of different groups of pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not maintained a good standard of education, especially for pupils at the end of key stage 2. Leaders have not ensured that any gaps in pupils' learning are addressed quickly enough to enable them to catch up. There have also been changes in teaching staff which have led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- Middle leaders have not been as effective as they could be because they have not analysed the reasons for underperformance in enough detail. This is improving, and action plans are in place to address weaknesses.
- The appointment of a new deputy headteacher has strengthened leadership. She has worked with the headteacher to address the decline in attainment and improve pupils' attitudes to learning.
- There is clear evidence that the new behaviour strategy is having an impact on reducing poor behaviour.
- The changes leaders have made to the English curriculum are improving standards in pupils' reading and writing. However, it is too early to judge their full impact.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by making short visits to lessons, longer observations and looking at pupils' work. Effective systems are in place to support teachers, which are beginning to improve their practice. Leaders provide increasingly effective whole-school training and individual coaching.
- The local authority has been working closely with the school to support leadership and management. It monitors teachers' assessments of pupils' work and effectively supports senior leaders when checking the quality of teaching and learning.
- An external review of the use of the pupil premium funding has been carried out. The results indicate that leaders have correctly identified the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. The money is spent appropriately both to provide targeted support for individual pupils and their learning and to help pupils with social and emotional barriers that they face.
- The additional sports premium and physical education funding is used well. Pupils have access to two hours of sport a week, taught by their class teacher and a qualified sports coach. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in sports clubs and inter-school competitions.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. The curriculum is supplemented with a varied choice of clubs and activities, which are as diverse as the 'Little Musketeers' fencing club and meditation. The additional opportunities make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### Governance of the school

- Governors have not been holding leaders effectively to account. They have not been asking the right questions about pupils' achievement. The support provided by a

national leader of governance and the local-authority-appointed Strategic Intervention Board has strengthened their effectiveness.

- Governors have undergone training and now have a better understanding of their role. They make visits to school to look at the school in operation. They are now in a better position to ask relevant questions. Documents indicate that they are asking more challenging questions about pupils' progress. Governors know how the outcomes for pupils compare to all schools nationally.
- Regular checks are made to ensure that safeguarding procedures are being carried out appropriately. The governors have changed the school reception area to ensure that it is secure.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding leads are appropriately trained. Staff are aware of their responsibility to report any concerns they have about a pupil's well-being. They make any referrals to the relevant organisations and follow up concerns appropriately. Records are well kept and secure.
- Governors and senior staff ensure that all the necessary pre-employment checks are carried out on staff, volunteers and contractors before they are allowed to work with pupils. The identity of all visitors is carefully checked before they are allowed to enter the school. Visitors are provided with information on keeping pupils safe and the procedures they should follow if they have any concerns.
- Governors ensure that the school premises are safe by carrying out regular checks and risk assessments, for example for when pupils walk to the infant school for lunch.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teachers do not match learning activities precisely enough to the starting points of the pupils. In some lessons pupils are given work that is too easy, and in others they are given work that is too hard.
- In English and mathematics, pupils choose from a range of tasks which are of varying difficulty. Too often they select the easier option and work on this for too long. This is because some teachers are not guiding pupils to choose the most appropriate level of challenge or checking pupils' understanding quickly enough in order to swiftly move them on to tasks that will deepen their skills, knowledge or understanding. The most able pupils in particular are not always sufficiently challenged. This is more predominant in mathematics than in English.
- There are inconsistencies in the expectations of teachers. The work in pupils' books indicated that not all teachers have the same high expectations.
- Mathematics teaching is too focused on pupils practising the basic calculation skills to develop fluency. There is little evidence of pupils being provided with activities to develop their reasoning skills.
- In lessons where learning was most effective, teachers skilfully questioned pupils to

test their understanding and extend their learning. Teachers also checked pupils' work carefully to assess their progress. Pupils were moved on to new work as soon as they were ready or given the support they needed in order to progress.

- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. They have a good understanding of what they are expected to achieve each lesson. This is because teachers ensure that pupils know what they are expected to achieve at the start of the lesson.
- Classrooms are bright and stimulating learning environments. The information on the walls helps pupils with their learning as it is relevant to the topics they are studying. Pupils use the learning prompts effectively to assist them when they are completing activities.
- Teaching assistants effectively support the pupils they work with. They clarify the work for the pupils and ask questions that enable pupils to complete the work.
- Homework is appropriately focused on developing mathematics and English skills and knowledge. Pupils are also provided with research homework linked to topics.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, especially when using the internet. Information about keeping safe is taught through personal, social and health education lessons, computing lessons and assemblies.
- Pupils say that bullying happens infrequently, and this is supported by the school records. Pupils feel listened to and have confidence that adults will deal with any problems they might have.
- There are a number of pupils with social and emotional needs who require additional support to manage their behaviour and emotions. The school works effectively with outside agencies and parents to ensure that the needs of these pupils are met. When pupils find it difficult to control their emotions and/or behaviour, there are clear strategies in place to support these pupils and minimise any disruption to the learning of others.
- The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop independence through holding positions of responsibility. Pupils in all year groups have the opportunity to be members of the school council and pupil ambassadors. The ambassadors meet regularly with the headteacher and governors to discuss school improvement. Opportunities for older pupils include acting as 'buddies' to Year 3 pupils and becoming sports leaders. Fundamental British values are developed through these experiences and the curriculum, for example pupils learning about cultural diversity and British history.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.

- The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is above average and has been for the last two years. Leaders are not yet taking effective action to improve the attendance of this small group of pupils. Poor attendance is hindering the progress of these pupils.
- The majority of the time, pupils behave well in lessons. However, where the teaching is uninspiring, they lose concentration and occupy themselves by talking or trying to distract others.
- Movement around the school is well organised and most pupils walk around the school sensibly. On occasions, pupils become excitable and run in the corridor. However, they respond immediately when adults provide reminders.
- Pupils behave well in the playground and dining hall. They play well together and show respect for one another. Pupils know the routines and walk sensibly back into school at the end of play.
- Pupils are polite to one another and adults. Inspectors observed many examples of pupils showing good manners and an understanding of right from wrong. The recently introduced stepped approach to behaviour management has successfully reduced the amount of disruption in lessons when compared to the previous year. The focus is on positive behaviours and rewards. Pupils respond well to the system and they enjoy the rewards they receive for good behaviour, for example the 15 minutes of extra play. Teachers are consistent in their use of the policy.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- There has been a decline in standards at the end of Year 6 since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was below average in 2016 and 2017. However, the difference reduced in 2017.
- Pupils' progress in reading and mathematics has historically been well below average for all groups of pupils.
- Progress for current pupils in mathematics is not as rapid as it should be. Teachers have taken too long to address any gaps in the learning of pupils on entry to Year 3. As a result, the progress pupils are making is slow.
- Progress across a range of subjects is too variable. Pupils' work indicates that in some classes pupils make good progress because they are set interesting and challenging work. For example, in some classes, progress in science is good because pupils are expected to make predictions, conduct investigations and write evaluations of their findings. However, on too many occasions, pupils are not given the opportunity to develop their learning because activities do not provide the opportunity for them to deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities varies despite the good-quality support they receive. This is because the work set can be too difficult or too easy for them, especially in English.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is stronger than in reading and mathematics. The number of pupils who reached the expected standard in writing in 2017 was in line

with that nationally. Work in pupils' books indicates that progress in writing is strong for current pupils.

- Current pupils are making stronger progress in reading because of the changes made to the English curriculum. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to read fiction and non-fiction books. They read daily in school. The most able pupils who read to inspectors were very confident, fluent readers. They talked to inspectors about the books they enjoyed reading and how lessons were helping them to develop their understanding of characters and the plot of a novel. Pupils have the opportunity to read good-quality literature.
- Lower-ability pupils are reading books that are at an appropriate level. Those who read to inspectors were enthusiastic readers who are able to accurately work out difficult or unfamiliar words. The novels they are reading in class challenge their reading skills.
- Pupils are making good progress in German and music because the work is pitched at the right level.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is improving, and is similar to that of other pupils, in reading, writing and mathematics. Some of these pupils are making rapid progress. This was confirmed by the work seen in pupils' books.

## School details

Unique reference number	114861
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10044442

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Melissa Klein
Headteacher	Laura Fox
Telephone number	0208 508 2521
Website	<a href="http://www.alderton-jun.essex.sch.uk">www.alderton-jun.essex.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@alderton-jun.essex.sch.uk">admin@alderton-jun.essex.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	5–6 June 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium grant is above average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is below average. Most children are of White British heritage and speak English as a first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school met the 2016 floor standards for primary schools. These are the minimum expectations, set by the government, for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.



- The school is part of the Epping Forest Consortium of Schools. This is an informal federation of primary schools who work together to support one another.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of information to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. They observed learning in all year groups and talked to pupils about their work. Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books. The deputy headteacher joined inspectors for some of these observations.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the deputy headteacher, four members of the governing body, middle leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to two groups of pupils read and talked to them about their reading. They also talked informally to pupils at breaktime and lunchtime and visited an assembly.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's analysis of its own work and its improvement plan, information on pupils' progress and documents relating to the quality of teaching, staff training, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The lead inspector considered the 46 parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 27 free-text responses.
- Inspectors also spoke informally to staff about their views of the school.

## Inspection team

Caroline Parry, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Harbrow	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Hughes	Ofsted Inspector

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