

Sir Alexander Fleming Primary School

109 Southgate, Sutton Hill, Telford, Shropshire TF7 4HG

Inspection dates

26–27 March 2019

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
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The recently appointed headteacher has built on the previous strengths of the school. She has clearly and accurately defined appropriate areas for improvement.
- The headteacher has accessed external support to ensure that senior leaders and governors have a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities. She sets high expectations and communicates these clearly. This has led to governors offering enhanced support and challenge.
- Children in the early years benefit from high-quality teaching in an inspiring environment, and, as a result, make substantial progress in all areas of learning.
- Support for pupils' personal development and welfare is a strength of the school. Leaders' vision for every pupil to have the very best care shines through.
- Subject leaders benefit from specific training. They know their subject areas well. The leadership of mathematics is particularly effective.
- Teachers use their assessments of what pupils can do effectively to provide greater challenge for the most able. However, in some year groups and in some subjects, the most able pupils are still not provided with enough challenge.
- Leaders plan the curriculum carefully in a way that inspires and excites pupils. Links to the local and wider community further enhance the curriculum, which broadens pupils' life experiences.
- While the majority of pupils make strong progress in writing, teachers do not consistently address basic mistakes, so pupils repeat them. Letter formation is inconsistent in size, orientation and joining. This hampers pupils' progress in writing.
- Leaders and staff give reading a high priority. Weekly 'reading mornings' promote the importance of reading to families. Pupils say that they enjoy reading.
- In mathematics, pupils achieve well and make strong progress. They skilfully reason and problem solve and show maturity in oral and written explanations.
- Pupils' additional needs are accurately identified. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress. However, on occasions, these pupils are over-reliant on the adults who support them.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in school, when using the internet and on trips and visits.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - address basic misconceptions in grammar, punctuation and spelling consistently so that pupils do not repeat mistakes
 - improve pupils' handwriting skills
 - challenge the most able pupils more consistently so that they achieve the standards of which they are capable
 - reduce pupils' dependency on support from adults, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The recently appointed headteacher and the senior leadership team work as a strong partnership. Together, they have identified what is working well in the school and what needs to improve. The wider leadership team complements and strengthens their work.
- Leaders at all levels demonstrate an energy and passion for the positive difference they make to pupils' lives. The drive to develop pupils' physical, mental, social and emotional well-being as well as their academic achievements is clearly evident. Leaders live and breathe the school's motto: 'Educate, Motivate, Facilitate'.
- Subject leaders for English, mathematics and science have secure subject knowledge. The leadership of mathematics is particularly effective in ensuring consistency in reasoning and problem solving across the school. In other subjects, leaders' monitoring accurately identifies strengths and areas for development in teaching.
- The school's external school improvement adviser has an accurate view of the quality of education. Alongside the headteacher, they provide effective support to governors and to leaders who are new to their role. Governors and leaders now have a better understanding of how to monitor and evaluate the impact of their work.
- The recently formed curriculum leadership team keeps the needs and interests of pupils central to all its decisions on curriculum design. Leaders place great importance on providing opportunities and experiences that bring learning to life for the pupils. Theatre groups, drama workshops, educational visits and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum and pupils' life experiences.
- Outdoor learning in the school grounds and the local area also enhances many topics studied. Learning is not just contained to the local area. Recently, Year 6 pupils spent five days in France to develop their spoken French and to experience the French culture. Some even chose to sample the snails and the frogs' legs. Parents and carers value these opportunities: 'They give our children real chances in life – the trip to France is an incredible experience and one that our children will never forget.'
- Pupils also benefit from an extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities, including many sports, music and arts-based activities. Governors and staff are determined that all pupils will raise their expectations of what they can achieve in life. From singing in a large choir in Birmingham to singing on the local radio, taking part in many sporting competitions, experiencing risk-taking outdoor-learning activities, visiting the seaside and staying away from home in England and abroad, these memory-making experiences really do equip pupils to be well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is spent wisely. Governors and senior leaders have received training in their responsibilities. Leaders have identified the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils in the school, which informs effective targeting of the pupil premium. For example, the recent development of the key stage 2 nurture room and the support provided to disadvantaged pupils in this provision are having a positive impact for many pupils.
- Leaders use the physical education (PE) and sport premium successfully to improve pupils' health and well-being. A sports coach has supported increased pupil

participation in competitive sports. Pupils access a broad range of sports, including football, dance, rugby, golf and cross-country. Resources and equipment have been purchased to enhance the teaching of PE and to ensure that pupils are more physically active at lunchtimes.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They audit their skills and undertake training, including in safeguarding and safer recruitment training, to ensure that they are effective in their role. Minutes of meetings show that they hold leaders to account effectively.
- Governors are well informed because they scrutinise reports from leaders and visit the school to find out what is going on. All leaders and governors share the same vision for the school and strive to ensure that pupils get the best nurture, care and education. Governors have a strong understanding of the difficulties that leaders face. They balance challenge and support and recognise what the recently appointed headteacher has achieved in a relatively short space of time.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Relevant checks on staff and visitors are carried out correctly. Record-keeping is organised well, and all information is kept securely.
- Leaders are fully aware of the potential risks pupils and their families face in the community. They use this knowledge to keep pupils safe and to support their families. Several senior staff members have trained as designated safeguarding leads. Leaders are quick to act on any concerns raised, and information is passed to the right people in a timely manner.
- Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture which ensures that everyone understands their responsibility for keeping pupils safe and promoting their welfare. Staff receive effective training in safeguarding matters. As a result, they know the signs of different types of abuse and are clear about how to report any concerns they have, using the school's agreed procedures.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Staff and pupils form strong and positive relationships. Pupils work cooperatively together and enjoy sharing their ideas. Teachers and teaching assistants have a deep understanding of pupils' individual needs.
- Teachers' mathematical subject knowledge is secure. Teachers provide pupils with a range of models, images, strategies and resources to help them tackle mathematical calculations. They then give pupils the opportunity to apply these mathematical skills in problem-solving and reasoning activities. Pupils are expected to record their mathematical explanations and reasons in writing. Pupils have frequent opportunities to practise and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as geography and science, which helps them to embed their learning.

- Teachers provide pupils with a range of opportunities to develop their writing skills, including in subjects other than English. Work in books shows that pupils write for a variety of purposes, such as traditional stories, diary entries, adventure stories, arguments and newspaper reports. Exciting themes, such as the Vikings, motivate pupils to write. This has supported all pupils to see themselves as writers, especially boys and disadvantaged pupils. However, teachers do not consistently identify and address pupils' mistakes in basic grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting well enough. This leads to pupils repeating the mistakes, both in English and across other subjects, which hinders their progress.
- Teachers generally use assessment well to inform their planning. They monitor pupils' progress within lessons and over time. However, on some occasions, teachers do not use assessment information well enough to provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils. This does not help some most-able pupils to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Adults supporting pupils with SEND and pupils who speak English as an additional language provide an appropriate range of resources to support their learning. While teaching assistants help many disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, the progress of some pupils is hindered because they grow to rely too heavily on the adult for help.
- Pupils develop their understanding of the different ways of spelling the same sounds and use their phonics skills to read books appropriate to their stage of learning. Pupils in key stage 2 discuss their reading in a mature manner. They told an inspector that they enjoy reading and can explain the different reading skills they use, such as inference, deduction and analysis. They can also explain why these skills are important to their future lives.
- Teachers attach a strong importance to ensuring that pupils experience a creative and practical curriculum across all subjects. For example, in science, pupils are given many purposeful opportunities to investigate and work scientifically in experiments such as mummifying a kiwi and developing germs on bread. In addition to this, pupils have opportunities to make meaningful and appropriate links between subjects. For example, in Year 5, pupils study the Vikings using an online 3D design computer program in preparation for creating their own Viking longboat on a 3D printer. This rich curriculum both inspires and excites pupils in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders and staff have created a caring and nurturing school where pupils are happy, feel safe and achieve well in most subjects. As one parent put it: 'This is a wonderful school and my daughter has made massive progress here, not only academically but personally and socially.'
- Pupils are very helpful and keen to welcome visitors to the school. They enjoy their responsibilities, for example being a member of the school council or an E-Cadet. Inspectors were impressed with the maturity shown by the youngest pupils when helping to serve drinks at lunchtime.

- E-Cadets take their role in helping to keep their peers safe online seriously. They lead assemblies and lessons on gaming, screen time, cookies and e-safety. Pupils understand how to keep safe in a range of situations.
- Pupils whom inspectors spoke to said that they feel safe. The majority of pupils who completed Ofsted's pupil questionnaire also said that they feel safe in school and that they had someone they could talk to in school. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agreed.
- Year 6 pupils show their ability to be active citizens as they independently collect and organise information and confidently record and present the weekly school news on screen.
- The school's breakfast club provides a safe and welcoming start to the day. Pupils attend for a variety of reasons, and for some the care and individual attention that they receive support a smooth transition into school and the start of their school day.
- Pupils are clear about the need for equality between people. They say, 'It doesn't matter what shade or tone you are or what country you come from. You should treat each other the same.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- School attendance levels have improved and are just above the national average. Leaders have taken robust action to reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. The importance of good attendance has a high profile across the school. Leaders monitor attendance carefully and promptly follow up any absence. They are alert to the possibility of children going missing from education and work with external agencies to minimise any risk.
- Pupils' attitudes to their work are good. In most lessons, pupils concentrate well. However, very occasionally, when work does not match their abilities, a few pupils become disengaged.
- The number of pupils excluded from school has been high. The well-being and inclusion team tracks all incidents of poor behaviour and provides support for those pupils who require it. Leaders continually reflect on how their provision meets pupils' needs. As a result, the new key stage 2 nurture room was introduced in January 2018. This provision, staffed with knowledgeable and experienced adults, is reducing behavioural incidents and is supporting pupils to remain in school.
- Leaders updated the behaviour policy in September 2018, and this has improved the consistency in approaches to managing behaviour. The majority of staff and parents responding to Ofsted's online surveys state that behaviour is managed well. Pupils understand the behaviour policy. They say, 'We have a good-to-be-green chart. It's very helpful to know how good you've been.' They appreciate the fairness of the points system.
- Pupils are respectful and considerate to each other within lessons and around the school. For example, in breakfast club, pupils from different year groups work together and support each other.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders make termly checks on the progress that individual pupils make. Together with the class teacher, they identify any gaps in learning and any pupils who might be at risk of falling behind. This information is used to plan effective intervention activities to help pupils catch up.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils who achieve the required standard in the phonics screening check has declined over time. The proportion that achieved the required standard in 2018 was below the national average. However, some pupils enter and leave the school at different points throughout the year. For pupils who were at the school from Nursery to the end of Year 1, the proportion that achieved the required standard in 2018 was above the national average.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was in line with the national average. Writing was significantly above. Pupils working at greater depth were at least in line with national averages.
- Pupils' progress by the end of key stage 2 in 2018 was broadly in line with the national average in reading and mathematics but was below in writing. In 2017, progress was above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work across the school and the school's own assessment information show that pupils currently are making good progress overall in reading and mathematics. Pupils' progress and attainment in writing are more variable because of inconsistencies in addressing basic mistakes in grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting.
- Disadvantaged pupils increasingly catch up with other pupils as they move through the school. Scrutiny of current pupils' books clearly shows high expectations, equality of opportunity and good progress over time for these pupils.
- Pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects. This is because teachers provide pupils with opportunities to develop a range of skills and make links between their learning. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Provision for children in the early years is highly effective.
- The early years leader has an accurate picture of the strengths and areas for further improvement across the setting. She is very well supported by the wider team of practitioners. They share a passion to ensure that children have amazing learning experiences. This enables children to learn and progress exceptionally well. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Adults carry out regular assessments of children's learning. They use the information gathered to plan activities which build carefully on children's early abilities. 'Learning journals' show rich and varied evidence and observations by adults about what children can and cannot do, and include parents' contributions. Adults use this information to precisely plan provision in all learning areas and make links to themes which engage

and interest the children. As a result, children are highly motivated to learn and maintain their concentration for a sustained length of time.

- Most children enter Nursery with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. By the time they leave the Reception Year, all children have made substantial progress in all areas of learning. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2018 was close to the national average.
- Adults think carefully and deeply about the learning environment. It is highly stimulating, purposeful and engaging. Consequently, children make independent choices about their activities. Children cooperate extremely well together. For example, when building a bridge, children had different ideas of what to use and how to do it. They debated with each other until they found a way that worked. They then completed the bridge and took turns in going over it.
- Skilled adults successfully balance supporting children at just the right moment to move their learning forward with knowing when to stand back and let them be independent. This contributes to children being very purposeful learners who make strong progress.
- Adults use the information gained from home visits to good effect. They plan a range of events and use a range of strategies to involve families in their children's learning. These events help leaders to establish positive relationships between home and school from the very beginning of a child's education.
- Phonics is taught well. Children are encouraged to use their knowledge of sounds when they are reading and writing. Children's books show the substantial and sustained progress they make in writing.
- Children have opportunities to work separately as a Nursery class and two Reception classes as well as times to mix together as an early years unit through 'open door' time. This fosters children's social interaction and has a very positive impact on their communication and language development.
- Further opportunities for children to interact are enhanced through a morning at Forest School. Adults make excellent use of the school's outdoor forest area to develop children's understanding of the world around them. Secure routines and relationships allow children to take risks and challenge themselves. For example, children enjoy baking kebab bread on sticks over the fire.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. All welfare requirements are met, and children are happy, safe and nurtured.

School details

Unique reference number	132086
Local authority	Telford & Wrekin
Inspection number	10058514

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	425
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Linda Cronin
Headteacher	Mrs Katy Tomlinson
Telephone number	01952 388010
Website	http://siralexanderflemingprimaryschool.co.uk/
Email address	a2134@telford.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2018

Information about this school

- Sir Alexander Fleming Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The previous headteacher retired at the end of the spring term 2018. An acting headteacher has been in post since then. She has recently been appointed as the substantive headteacher.
- There is an on-site nursery that has places for children from the age of three.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across all year groups. Some of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors undertook a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work across a range of subjects alongside school leaders.
- Inspectors undertook learning walks jointly with leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and senior and middle leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body, two other governors and the school's improvement adviser.
- Inspectors talked with pupils informally at playtimes, visited the dining hall at lunchtime and observed pupils' movements around the school. A formal meeting also took place with pupils.
- Inspectors looked at behaviour at the start of the school day, during lessons and during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoyed and those that they are currently reading.
- Inspectors met with pupils with their subject books and talked to them about their learning in science and foundation subjects.
- Inspectors observed the breakfast and after-school clubs and spoke to pupils who were attending.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the 15 responses to Ofsted's online parental questionnaire, Parent View, and the 15 free-text responses. Additionally, they took account of the 42 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 142 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- A range of documents were scrutinised by inspectors, including information about pupils' attendance, self-evaluation information, improvement plans, safeguarding records, pupil premium and sports strategies, minutes of governing body meetings and staff development records.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Maybank	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Turner	Ofsted Inspector

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