

Inspection of Alexandra School

Alexandra Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6SE

Inspection dates: 17–18 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy studying a range of subjects. However, teaching does not enable all pupils to grasp the knowledge and skills they need to achieve highly. Leaders and staff have not made sure that every pupil remembers the content they have been taught in subjects such as Spanish, music and science.

Teachers give selected pupils extra help to get better at reading and mathematics. Sometimes, this extra help takes place at the same time as Spanish and science lessons. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge of Spanish and science. Pupils told us that this leaves them confused about their learning

Pupils know that being kind and having 'good manners' matter. Pupils put this into practice here as they move between lessons. For example, we saw pupils holding doors open for one another. Pupils told us that they have 'lots of friends' and that bullying does not happen very often. They said that if it does occur, adults make it stop. Pupils behave well. However, we found that in lessons, some older pupils need frequent reminders from adults to settle down to their learning.

Pupils take part in popular clubs, including for art and yoga. These encourage pupils to develop new interests and talents.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and governors expect pupils to learn the essential knowledge set out in the national curriculum. However, subject plans do not support these aims effectively, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Plans for many subjects do not identify clearly what pupils should know and by when.

Over time, teaching has not ensured that pupils remember important knowledge. For instance, despite learning Spanish for several years, pupils' recall of simple Spanish phrases is poor. Pupils talked to us about the experiments they had conducted in science. However, they could not explain or remember what scientific concepts they had learned. Pupils are capable of achieving much more highly.

At the end of key stage 1, pupils are ready for the next stage of their education. They have the reading, writing and mathematics knowledge and skills that they need for the start of Year 3. In Years 3 to 6, staff provide 'catch-up' sessions in reading, writing and mathematics for selected pupils to help them to keep up. These sessions usually take place at the same time as Spanish, science, physical education (PE), and art and design lessons. As a result, selected pupils miss out on learning and do not acquire and secure important knowledge in a range of subjects. Leaders are unaware of the limiting effect this has on pupils' progression in these subjects.

The teaching of early reading is effective. The youngest pupils develop the phonics knowledge they need to read words accurately. Leaders expect and encourage pupils to read often. Most pupils do so because they like reading. However, when

lower-attaining pupils read books that are not matched to their ability, they struggle to become fluent, confident readers. In Years 3 to 6, subject planning does not introduce pupils to an increasingly rich diet of demanding books. This holds back pupils' progression in reading.

In early years, staff know how best to help children to settle in quickly. Teaching provides children with well-chosen and exciting activities. This supports children's academic and social development. Most children are prepared well for the start of Year 1. However, leaders do not check whether the planning and delivery of the curriculum ensures that children achieve the best possible outcomes.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective personalised support. This includes those pupils with complex additional needs who attend the resourced provision. Staff nurture pupils' self-esteem and independence effectively. This means that these pupils learn confidently alongside their peers.

Leaders provide high-quality provision to support pupils' personal development. The school's wide range of clubs focus on encouraging pupils to be physically active. At breaktime, staff encourage pupils to play energetic games to promote social skills and physical fitness. Leaders make sure that all pupils take part in the activities on offer, including pupils with SEND and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Pupils are considerate of others. In lessons, they work together well and listen respectfully to different opinions. However, some Year 5 and Year 6 pupils sometimes struggle to concentrate on the work teachers set. Leaders and staff have not made sure that these pupils develop the attitudes they need to achieve to the best of their abilities.

Since the previous inspection, the leadership team has not taken effective steps to ensure pupils achieve well in all subjects. Recently appointed leaders know what they need to do to improve the quality of education. Their plans are at an early stage, but there are some signs of success. In mathematics, leaders have decided what specific knowledge pupils need to learn to be ready for secondary school. They check that it is taught as intended. Pupils achieve well and enjoy studying this subject. Leaders have introduced new plans for other subjects, such as music. They aim to copy the strengths evident in mathematics.

Staff feel well supported by leaders. Parents and carers also spoke positively about leaders' work. Nevertheless, it is too soon to say whether leaders' actions will secure the necessary improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know pupils and their families well. Staff are vigilant, and report concerns quickly if they are worried about a pupil's welfare. Detailed record keeping means that leaders understand pupils' needs. Leaders follow up concerns effectively

so that pupils are kept safe. This includes effective partnership work with external agencies.

Staff provide pupils with strong pastoral care. This helps pupils to feel safe. Pupils know that adults will do their best to resolve any concerns that arise.

Leaders ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet and social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although pupils in key stage 2 have attended the school for some time, leaders have not planned coherently for their progression through all curriculum subjects. Leaders should make sure that pupils are taught the right things and in the right order, particularly from Years 3 to 6. Leaders should also make sure that staff understand why this order is important to secure pupils' understanding. Leaders and staff should know how the subject content that is taught builds on pupils' prior knowledge and prepares pupils to understand complex concepts in the future.
- Leaders have begun to make improvements to the quality of education, but the impact of their work is variable. In some subjects, such as music, new plans have just been introduced. Prior to the start of this academic year, the teaching of music was sporadic. In subjects such as Spanish, computing and science, curriculum plans exist but they are not effective in ensuring that all pupils remember important knowledge. Leaders and governors should evaluate the effectiveness of how the curriculum is constructed and delivered. They should act to improve the quality of education based on what they find. In evaluating the quality of the curriculum, leaders should consider not only how well content is taught, but also whether it is sequenced effectively. This includes in early years.
- Leaders should make sure that any additional support pupils receive for reading, writing and mathematics is not at the expense of pupils' progression in other subjects.
- When pupils are learning to read, it is essential that they practise with books that match their phonics knowledge. Leaders are clear about the importance of this. However, leaders should ensure that staff know exactly which sounds lower-attaining pupils know and that staff select books for these pupils that only contain these sounds.
- In key stage 2 English, leaders have not ensured that pupils read progressively more difficult books to help them to deduce and infer meaning when reading unfamiliar texts. To support pupils' progression, leaders should consider carefully which books pupils should read and when they should read them. This is to ensure that pupils become familiar with a suitably wide and demanding range of authors and genres.
- Pupils typically behave well. However, leaders should ensure that pupils in Year 5

and Year 6 learn to manage their own behaviour and focus appropriately on the work teachers provide.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	102578
Local authority	Kingston upon Thames
Inspection number	10114867
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	442
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Louise Groves
Headteacher	Robert Waiting
Website	www.alexandra.kingston.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2008

Information about this school

- Most senior leaders, including the new headteacher, took up their posts at the start of the academic year.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has expanded to admit pupils in key stage 2. The school now has two classes in each year group from Reception through to Year 6. The current Year 6 pupils are the school's first cohort in this year group. The school continues to offer part-time provision for Nursery-aged children.
- The school provides resourced provision for up to 16 pupils with SEND on behalf of the local authority. The provision caters for pupils with moderate and complex additional needs.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- The inspection focused deeply on reading, mathematics, science, history and modern languages (Spanish). We met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons and spoke to pupils about their learning. We also reviewed samples of pupils' work and listened to pupils read. The quality of education in other subjects, such as music, computing, and art and design, were also considered as part of the inspection.
- We held discussions with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. We met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- We checked that the school carries out appropriate background investigations before staff are appointed. We held discussions with leaders who have responsibility for safeguarding. We reviewed documentation related to safeguarding pupils' welfare. We spoke to staff and considered the school's own survey of staff's views.
- We met formally with groups of pupils. We spoke to pupils informally throughout the inspection, including during visits to classrooms, in the playground and at the breakfast club. We considered the school's own survey of pupils' views as well as records of pupils' attendance, behaviour and incidents of bullying.
- We spoke to parents informally before the start of the school day. The 153 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's survey for parents, were considered, alongside the school's most recent survey of parents' views.

Inspection team

Sarah Murphy-Dutton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Roberts	Ofsted Inspector
Sahreen Siddiqui	Ofsted Inspector

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