

Inspection of an outstanding school: Alexandra School

Alexandra Avenue, South Harrow, Harrow HA2 9DX

Inspection dates:

6–7 November 2019

Outcome

Alexandra School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very positive about Alexandra School. They are actively engaged in their lessons and in lunchtime activities. They work well alongside each other.

The school provides a wide range of learning opportunities for pupils. Teachers prepare interesting lessons and pupils achieve well. Pupils enjoy taking part in a variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs which enrich their experiences, including gardening, yoga, street jazz, karate and cookery. The whole school goes on a camp each year, which enables pupils to grow in confidence and maturity.

Parents and carers said that staff are approachable and are like an extension of their own family. Pupils are well supported by staff. Teachers have high expectations for all pupils. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the move to secondary school.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. All children understand the 'golden rules'. They work to earn stars which are displayed outside the hall. The atmosphere in school is friendly and purposeful. Pupils feel safe because bullying is a rare occurrence. Pupils are confident that teachers will sort out any concerns that they may have.

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

Leaders have worked with teachers to design a curriculum that is appropriate for pupils who attend the school. There are very well-organised plans for how all subjects should be taught. Leaders provide training for staff so that everyone is clear what pupils need to learn and what skills they need to develop. This results in pupils learning and remembering more.

In mathematics, for example, pupils grasp difficult ideas because teachers are confident teaching this subject. Pupils told us how their work from previous years was helping them to learn more. Similarly, in English, the links between lessons and with other subjects are well planned. Pupils practise what they have learned. Teachers provide plenty of

opportunities for pupils to develop their reading and writing skills.

Teachers read regularly to pupils. They select books carefully. Pupils are absorbed by the stories and develop a love of reading. Pupils boost their phonics skills by reading books that help them to practise what they have learned. Pupils read to us, clearly demonstrating their reading skills and their enjoyment of books.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners because teachers provide stimulating activities that are tailored to their needs. For example, thoughtfully chosen resources mean that pupils can use the equipment in computing lessons. They acquire valuable computing skills and enjoy applying these in a range of other subjects.

Physical activity is an important part of pupils' time at the school. Staff receive specialist support to deliver physical education (PE) lessons. Pupils take part in a wide range of experiences, both in lessons and at other times. These include swimming, cycling and rock climbing. All classes exercise each day, enjoying 'the daily mile' activity, which is adapted successfully to meet pupils' needs.

Pupils receive individualised support in all subjects to help them meet their targets. They achieve well. They are generally attentive and settled. If pupils become distracted, they receive help quickly, and learning is rarely disrupted.

Pupils join a wide range of lunchtime activities and after-school clubs. The clubs are very popular. Leaders make sure that all pupils are able to join in.

Staff feel that leaders support them well. Leaders listen to staff views about workload and take appropriate actions to support them. Both pupils and staff say that others in the school care for them.

The advisory board and trustees of the multi-academy trust work closely with school leaders. They know the school well and are clear about the school's strengths and areas for further development. Trustees and advisory board members regularly check on the school's curriculum and are actively involved in the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are regularly given safeguarding training. All processes for keeping children safe work well. Reporting procedures are in place and all staff know what to do if they have any concerns. Leaders work well with other agencies if pupils need extra support. The trust provides advice for leaders and support for safeguarding administration.

Teachers and parents told us that they feel pupils are safe at school. Teachers help pupils to develop skills to be safe outside school, including e-safety workshops.

Background

When we have judged a special school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding on 8–9 March 2016.

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 are 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	140122
Local authority	Harrow
Inspection number	10110435
Type of school	Primary special
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees (The Eden Trust)
Chair of trust	Mr Barry Nolan
Headteacher	Mrs Perdy Buchanan-Barrow
Website	www.alexandra-school.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 March 2016

Information about this school

- Alexandra School is a primary special school for children with moderate learning difficulties.

Information about this inspection

- We visited lessons across the school with senior leaders. We met with pupils and teachers, and looked at questionnaires completed by parents, pupils and staff. We also met with the chair of trustees, the chair of the advisory board and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, PE and computing. We visited lessons across the school with senior leaders and met with teachers and pupils from those lessons. We looked at pupils' work.
- We looked at the school's systems and processes for keeping children safe. We talked to staff, parents and pupils and asked them about safeguarding.

Inspection team

Penny Barratt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jayne Jardine

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