

Inspection of Alfred Street Junior School, Rushden

Alfred Street, Rushden, Northamptonshire, NN10 9YS

Inspection dates: 10–11 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming school where most pupils enjoy learning. Leaders want pupils to achieve well. Teachers' expectations of what pupils should and can do are rising. Pupils are now reaching higher standards in some of their learning. This is not yet the case across all subjects, or for some pupils.

The school learning environment is stimulating and vibrant. Many pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils told us that behaviour is improving. A few pupils with more complex needs sometimes disrupt the learning of others. Staff care for the pupils well and help them to keep safe. Pupils told us how they can talk with an adult if they have any worries. Most pupils feel that staff deal with bullying well when it does occur.

Staff set good examples and show pupils how to be respectful citizens. Pupils play and get on well together. Most pupils were friendly and polite towards us during the inspection. Pupils understand and follow the school's values. They take part in community activities. Pupils lay wreaths at the yearly memorial service. They also attend armed forces days and donate to local food banks.

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

Leaders have begun to design a suitable curriculum for mixed-aged classes. In 2019, Year 6 pupils achieved better in reading, writing and mathematics than pupils have done in the past. In all subjects, there is now a planned programme of what pupils need to know and be able to do. In some subjects there is a sensible order in which to teach new content. This is not the case in all subjects.

At times, teachers' knowledge and practice are not as strong as they should be. Pupils do not remember enough about what they have learned. Some pupils find it difficult to recall key information. Leaders are supporting teachers to better deliver the subject plans. Teachers are developing new assessment approaches. This is beginning to help them identify and fill gaps in pupils' learning.

Some pupils in Year 3 have weak reading skills. Leaders have introduced a new phonics programme and have trained staff to deliver it. It is too soon to know how effective the programme will be in improving pupils' early reading skills. The books which pupils read as part of this programme are well matched to the sounds they know. Most pupils told us that they enjoy reading. They make good use of the library and change their books often. Some pupils are not confident when discussing their reading or book choices.

Leaders have launched a new approach to writing this year. They have created long-term plans for what pupils should learn and be able to do. Although it is early days, the quality of pupils' writing is showing signs of improvement.

Most pupils behave well. Yet, some pupils behave in a way that disrupts the learning of others. Leaders are developing pupils' resilience and self-awareness. The outdoor adventure programme is supporting this well. Staff provide a good range of activities beyond the classroom. Pupils were eager to tell us about the knitting club. We also saw 'sports crew' pupils enjoying leading playtime games. Leaders prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Pupils' understanding of the spiritual and cultural differences in the world is still developing.

Leaders do not provide pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) with enough support. Teachers do not adapt the curriculum to match the needs of these pupils as well as they should. Leaders do not ensure that pupils' improvement targets are precise enough. They do not check incidents of poor behaviour well enough to help some pupils improve their behaviour.

The local authority and a national leader in governance support the work of the school well. Leaders are working hard to get parents involved with their children's learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make the right checks on staff before they start work at the school. Staff are knowledgeable and understand current safeguarding guidance and procedures. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. The school's personal, social, health and economic education programme contributes well to this. Pupils have the confidence to talk to staff if they have a problem. Staff are vigilant in looking out for signs that a pupil may be at risk. Leaders respond well to any concerns reported. They are diligent in following up these concerns and make sure that pupils get the support they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The full curriculum is not sufficiently well developed to build pupils' knowledge. Pupils do not gain enough knowledge in some subjects. Leaders should develop the subject plans they have started so that they build up pupils' knowledge and skills in a coherent and logical manner.
- Teachers do not consistently deliver the curriculum well. This includes their use of assessment to check on what pupils know and can remember. Some pupils do not learn as well as others do. Sometimes teachers do not meet pupils' learning needs as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the knowledge and skills to deliver the planned curriculum. They should make sure that teachers follow the agreed subject plans. Leaders should develop teachers' use of assessment to check what pupils learn and remember.

- Some pupils in Year 3 have weak reading skills. They do not catch up quickly enough. These pupils find it difficult to access the full curriculum. Leaders should build on what they have started in implementing the new phonics programme. They should ensure that pupils have the required reading knowledge to access the full range of subjects.
- Leaders have not paid enough attention to supporting pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they should across the curriculum. At times their behaviour disrupts the learning of other pupils. Leaders should ensure that pupils with SEND receive appropriate support to help them improve their behaviour and achieve well.

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	121857
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10110043
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	122
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Carr-Archer
Headteacher	Kelly O'Connor
Website	www.alfredstreetjunior.org
Date of previous inspection	27–28 June 2017

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection a new headteacher has been appointed.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and other staff. We met with four representatives of the governing body, including the acting chair of the governing body. We also spoke with a member of the local authority.
- We looked in detail at four subjects: reading, writing, science and history, to consider the quality of education. We visited lessons, some with leaders. We met with teachers, subject leaders and pupils, and looked at a sample of pupils' work. We also listened to pupils' reading and observed pupils at playtimes.
- We looked at a range of other documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. We also looked at leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, and their planning documentation. We reviewed and considered the information on the school's website.
- We spoke with parents and considered their responses to Ofsted's online survey,

Ofsted Parent View, and the school's own surveys.

Inspection team

Vondra Mays, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Caroline Evans

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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