

Inspection of Athelney Primary School

Athelney Street, London SE6 3LD

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 July 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel part of a school community. They said that the best things about their school are the teachers and each other. Pupils appreciate that teachers know them well. Staff notice if pupils are upset or having a bad day. Pupils are proud of their school. They can take part in clubs such as art, science and dance. Pupils enjoy going on trips and residential visits. They value being able to take books from the 'secret library.' Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their favourite books and authors such as Roald Dahl.

Teachers have high expectations of attendance, work and behaviour. Pupils said teachers are kind but strict. Pupils can concentrate on their learning because low level disruption is rare. Leaders work well with parents and carers. Typically, parents said that nothing is too much trouble for staff. Parents like the school's highly inclusive ethos.

Pupils said that they feel safe at school. They have a trusted adult to speak to if they are worried about anything. They are aware of online dangers, particularly grooming. Bullying is rare. Pupils would speak to their teacher if it happened. They are confident that teachers would tackle the bullies.

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

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum which starts in the early years. Each subject plan is well sequenced. Pupils' knowledge and skills build up over time. Leaders have built in opportunities to revisit key concepts.

Typically, teachers in mathematics and reading have strong subject knowledge. They question pupils skilfully to check their understanding and recall. In mathematics, teachers challenge pupils to apply their learning to real life scenarios. They use 'curve ball' questions to encourage pupils to problem-solve. Pupils can explain in detail the methods they have used to reach a conclusion.

In subjects where teacher subject knowledge is less secure, pupils' experience is more variable. In art and geography, some staff have gaps in their subject knowledge. On occasion, this impacts on their delivery of the well-planned curriculum. As a result, pupils do not develop their knowledge as effectively.

In mathematics and reading, teachers regularly assess pupils' work. They provide helpful feedback. This helps pupils to make progress. In a few subjects, assessment procedures are not as well developed. This makes it difficult for teachers to check what pupils know and remember. Although pupils achieve well overall, this affects how well some progress through the curriculum.

Leaders provide well planned opportunities for pupils to write for purpose and audience. This emphasis on language and communication starts in the early years. For example, staff modelled the word, 'habitat' when speaking about frogs in the pond. Pupils write for different purposes and audiences. By the time they are in Year 6, they can write extended biographies, reports and essays.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) also become confident writers. Teachers and support staff work closely to provide scaffolds for writing. They remove them as pupils become more independent. Staff adjust their questions and instructions for pupils with SEND. They target pupils for catch up in reading and mathematics in a timely way. Pupils get extra support with their fine and gross motor skills, language development and in building confidence. The school provides therapeutic interventions to help pupils to manage their emotions.

Leaders prioritise phonics when pupils start school. Teachers help pupils to recall sounds. They move on when pupils are ready. If pupils fall behind, staff help them catch up. Pupils read for pleasure every day. They enjoy story time and choosing their own books. They make use of the school library at break and lunch time.

The personal development programme is ambitious. It is underpinned by leaders' commitment to including everyone. Pupils learn about respecting other people's religious beliefs. They recently celebrated Eid. This gave them an appreciation of multi-cultural Britain. Pupils have their own parliament in school. They learn about democracy and the rule of law. Pupils in Years 4 and 6 have visited the Houses of Lords and Commons. The wider curriculum responds to community issues such as avoiding debt. Teachers encourage discussion about mental and physical health, particularly since COVID-19.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the opportunities for professional development that leaders provide. Leaders prioritise staff wellbeing and workload. As a result, many staff commit to staying at the school long term.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is everyone's business. Staff have regular safeguarding training. The safeguarding team work well with professionals to help pupils and families. These include the police, social services and the school nursing team to name but a few. Leaders are tenacious in progressing cases and ensuring follow up is timely. The local authority complete audits of safeguarding. They ensure procedures and policies are secure. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in school, online and in the local area. The record of checks on staff is well maintained. Governors and school leaders review it often.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff have gaps in their subject knowledge in art and geography. On occasion this impacts on their delivery of the well-planned curriculum. Leaders should provide training to plug these gaps and to develop teacher confidence. This will help pupils to deepen their understanding in art and geography.
- In reading and mathematics, assessment processes are well embedded. This is not consistently the case across the school, especially in the foundation subjects. Sometimes this makes it difficult for teachers to check precisely what pupils know and remember in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that teachers have a secure understanding of how to check pupils' learning in all the foundation subjects.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the school and 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	100672
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	10226966
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	442
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Cathy Ruiz
Executive Headteacher	Kathryn Wong
Head of school	Nathalie Dummer
Website	www.athelneyprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the King Alfred Federation.
- The school has a Nursery provision. Most pupils transfer to Reception at the end of their time in the Nursery.
- The school has a specialist resourced provision for pupils with SEND. This offers 19 places and caters for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder.
- The proportion of pupils receiving SEND support is above average, as is the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- The school runs a breakfast club and a range of after school clubs.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders from the school and the chair of the governing body. They spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, geography and art. As part of this, inspectors visited lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and reviewed their work. Inspectors also met with subject leaders and teachers. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke with leaders in other subjects. Inspectors listened to pupils read and spoke to pupils about reading.
- Through discussion with leaders, pupils and staff, inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding. Inspectors looked at records relating to safeguarding, including pre-employment checks for staff and checks on relevant qualifications.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and spoke to pupils in lessons to consider their views on the school.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and at breaktime. Inspectors spoke to a range of staff about behaviour, their workload and well-being. Inspectors considered responses from staff to the Ofsted survey.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's survey for parents, including written comments. Consideration was also given to recent surveys for pupils that the school conducted.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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