

Inspection of Alma Primary School

Alma Road, Ponders End, Enfield EN3 4UQ

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 February 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff reflect the school's values in all aspects of life in school. Pupils are friendly. They work and play together cheerfully. They feel proud to take on responsibilities in the school community, wearing different coloured sweatshirts to indicate their roles. Pupils said that the pupil mental-health ambassadors look out for anyone who might be feeling sad. Sports ambassadors encourage physical fitness and pupils' participation in varied sports and activities. Pupils are kept safe in school because the adults look after them well.

Staff nurture positive relationships with and between pupils right from the start of Nursery. Pupils work and play together, showing great respect and care. Children in early years, including the two-year-olds, settle rapidly into well-established routines and are keen to join in and help others. Their speech and communication skills develop substantially.

Leaders work with parents and carers to help them to support their child's learning at home. Staff organise workshops and café events and provide parents with guidance on themes such as reading, well-being and e-safety.

Leaders have high expectations that all pupils will have a happy and successful time at school. They provide pupils with valuable experiences so that pupils are well prepared for their next stage.

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

Senior and subject leaders have thought through clearly what they expect pupils to learn in every subject. Leaders have identified the key facts and skills that pupils are taught from early years to Year 6. Teachers know and fulfil leaders' expectations. Teachers regularly check that pupils remember what they have learned previously. They reinforce pupils' knowledge before moving on to more ambitious and demanding content.

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to provide clear explanations and useful examples to help pupils learn. Leaders are developing teachers' subject knowledge where it is less strong so that all staff anticipate common errors to support swift improvement of pupils' understanding and skills. Leaders are very clear about the areas that they want to develop further in each subject. Their work to support staff with training needs is ongoing and effective. In a very few cases, subject leadership is in its early stages so that the precise content and the order in which it should be taught and staff training opportunities are continuing to be developed.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of early reading to children in early years and pupils in Years 1 and 2. Staff have received training and have a high level of expertise in delivering the school's chosen phonics scheme. Pupils swiftly learn to read. Those who need extra help, including pupils who join the school part-way through their

primary education, are given the support they need to quickly catch up. In Years 3 to 6, leaders make sure that pupils read regularly, with a focus on developing reading comprehension skills. Although pupils learn to decode words accurately, they do not spend regular time on reading practice to ensure that they all become fluent and confident readers who are ready for secondary school.

Leaders ensure that staff are trained to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff work closely with specialist outside agencies to provide each pupil with SEND with support to meet their needs.

Leaders have very carefully planned a programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) that includes relationships and sex education. Children are taught about key themes in an age-appropriate way from early years onwards. Staff provide plenty of opportunities to promote pupils' physical fitness and mental health.

Pupils behave very sensibly in lessons and around the school at social times. From the earliest opportunity, staff set a very strong example of the calm and thoughtful attitudes that they expect of their pupils. In early years, children's personal, social and emotional skills develop rapidly as they are taught to share, politely wait their turn, persevere and celebrate each other's successes.

Pupils broaden their experiences through a wide variety of activities and clubs. Pupils have swimming courses at the local Olympic Park, attend singing events with pupils from other local schools and visit places of historical interest to enrich their subject learning. Leaders offer a great variety of clubs, including for coding, journalism, glee-club and various sports. They make sure that all pupils have the chance to attend.

The trustees and local governing body have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development. Staff value links with colleagues from across the trust for training and to share ideas.

Staff feel very well supported in their roles. Leaders regularly consult with staff to inform training and communicate any changes to policy and practice. Staff appreciate the steps leaders take to help with workload and their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that they and all staff receive safeguarding training, know what to look out for to identify whether a pupil might be at risk, and how to report their concerns.

Leaders provide staff and parents with regular updates and reminders, giving helpful guidance on protecting pupils from safeguarding risks, including in the local community and when using online resources.

Leaders work closely with outside agencies to support pupils and their families when there are safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding pupils is included in the curriculum, such as e-safety in computing and PSHE.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a very few subjects, curriculum content is being developed and is not as explicitly thought through as it is in most other subjects. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders receive the support and guidance they need to refine their curriculum thinking and oversee effective subject delivery, providing staff training as needed.
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils do not spend enough time practising reading. Leaders focus on developing pupils' reading comprehension, which means that some pupils do not acquire reading fluency and automaticity as swiftly as they are capable of doing. Leaders should continue with their plans to provide pupils in Years 3 to 6 with reading practice routinely.

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.

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	145984
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	10255429
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	488
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Pat Wood
Headteacher	Helen Thomas
Website	www.almaprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to academy status in September 2018. It is part of Attigo Academy Trust.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children as part of its early years provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, representatives of the local governing body and the trustees, including the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some

pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Leaders also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.

- The inspection of safeguarding included reviewing leaders' processes for following up concerns, looking at staff training records, meeting with leaders with responsibility for safeguarding, and considering aspects of the curriculum that are relevant to safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents expressed in the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and by talking to parents at the school gate. Inspectors also looked at the responses to surveys completed by staff and by pupils.

Inspection team

Amanda Carter-Fraser, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Bob Hamlyn	His Majesty's Inspector
Madeleine Gerard	His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2023