

# Inspection of Alexander First School

Kenneally, Oakley Green, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 4XP

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Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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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?**

Alexander First School is a small school with a big heart. Many pupils have attended more than one school previously, as their parents move regularly because they serve in the army. The challenges pupils face as a consequence are never far from leaders' minds. Staff ensure that they know pupils well, and want the best for them. They work as a capable team to ensure that pupils make progress and that they are happy learning and playing together. In class, pupils support each other through paired work and enthusiastically contribute to discussions.

During lunchtimes, pupils play a variety of games and have the opportunity to use the extensive school grounds with their friends. They play a range of games and can choose to participate in activities led by the sports coach, challenges supervised by staff or make up their own games. Pupils look forward to the various lunchtime and after-school clubs.

Pupils are kind. They value each other and show great understanding of the challenges they face. Pupils know that it can be difficult to move to a new school, and embrace new friends warmly and with open arms. Bullying at Alexander First School is rare. Pupils rightly have complete confidence that, if it happens, adults will respond quickly to help resolve the matter.

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

Leaders are single-minded in their determination to give pupils the best possible educational opportunities to set them up well for the future, whether in this school or another. They live by the school motto, 'Acquire knowledge, prepare for the future, research in action', keeping the curriculum under review based on recognised evidence about how pupils learn effectively.

Learning to read is at the heart of the curriculum. Leaders prioritise determining how well pupils can read as soon as they join the school. The focus on helping pupils to learn to read quickly supports pupils to gain confidence and access learning across the curriculum. Adults are well trained in the teaching of early reading. They help pupils develop their ability to link the knowledge they have of sounds to writing words and sentences. Assessment information is used to understand the specific sound knowledge pupils have gained and identify where they need support. Pupils become increasingly confident in their ability to read during their time at the school, and enjoy reading with an adult.

The mathematics curriculum is well established and ambitious. Leaders have adapted it to meet the needs of a transient population, with lots of opportunities to revisit and reinforce key knowledge and concepts. They have provided staff with effective professional development opportunities so that they are experts in the teaching of mathematics. Teachers use practical resources, pictorial representations and modelled examples to help pupils understand mathematical concepts and processes accurately. They provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise new

knowledge before working independently, and check pupils' understanding carefully so that they learn well.

Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Leaders often draw on commercial schemes to structure the curriculum and set out learning, from early years through to Year 4. Staff use common approaches to help pupils learn. From early years upwards, there is a focus on purposeful interactions to help pupils learn key vocabulary and explain their thinking. Trips complement the curriculum and help pupils make links between what they are learning about in class and the real world.

Assessment information is used to identify strengths and the areas individual pupils need to improve. This information helps the special educational needs coordinator ensure staff provide effective support, such as extra teaching before or after lessons or small-group work, to help pupils make progress. However, the way some subjects are taught means that pupils have weeks between learning in these subjects. While they can remember recent learning, they find it difficult to make links with what they learned previously.

Relationships are positive. Pupils enjoy working together to learn. They encourage each other by using opportunities to talk to partners about their response to questions teachers have asked. At times, this leads to debates about complex ideas. Pupils learn about responsibility, choice, ambition and aspiration and to be accepting of differences. They contribute to the community they live in. Recently, the school choir sang carols at The Savill Garden, Windsor Great Park. Pupils speak fondly of this experience.

The headteacher is a tenacious leader. She works in partnership with an effective governing body to meet the needs of the school community. A clear, shared vision guides all decisions, which are made in pupils' best interests.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders go the extra mile to ensure pupils are safe. Where pupils have joined from schools abroad, leaders ensure they do all they can to find information about these pupils. They work closely with external agencies to secure support, which enables families to flourish. Referrals are quickly made, leading to pupils being given support efficiently. Pupils are confident that staff will help them and, because of this, they feel safe at school.

The curriculum is designed to teach pupils how to stay safe. In computing, pupils are taught how to stay safe online and in personal, social and health education, they learn about healthy friendships.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects are taught in blocks. Where this is the case, pupils find it difficult to remember what they have learned previously. Leaders should consider how best to ensure teaching builds pupils' learning systematically over time in all 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109884
<b>Local authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256363
<b>Type of school</b>	First school
<b>School category</b>	Community school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	96
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Chris Monk
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mariam Khokar
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.alexanderfirst.co.uk">www.alexanderfirst.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning, spoke with teachers and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors also heard some pupils read.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector held a meeting with governors and a separate meeting with the local authority adviser.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text comments. Inspectors also talked with parents on the first day of the inspection.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views through meetings, visits to lessons and discussions at other times of the school day.
- Inspectors visited the before-school provision, and observed pupils playing at lunchtime and eating together in the school hall.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record, reviewed safeguarding procedures and records with leaders and spoke to pupils and staff.

### **Inspection team**

Francois Walker, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mo Galway

Ofsted Inspector

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