

Inspection of Alban Wood Primary School and Nursery

The Brow, Watford, Hertfordshire WD25 7NX

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 December 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The head of school is Hazel Pinder. This school is part of the Agora Learning Partnership Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Rebecca Daulman, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Carol Shutkever. There is also an executive headteacher, Jonny Spector, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of the Alban Wood family. They love learning. They show respect for each other and for the adults who look after them. Relationships throughout the school are built on trust. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy.

The school is highly inclusive. Its diverse community supports pupils' understanding of difference. Pupils value and celebrate this in lessons, assemblies and in the playground. Pupils show tolerance and kindness towards each other, regardless of any differences between them.

Pupils are encouraged to aim high. Adults make their expectations consistently clear. Pupils rise to meet these. Around the school, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite, friendly and helpful. Pupils work hard and have high aspirations for their future lives. Archaeologist, architect, doctor and naturalist are just a few examples of pupils' career goals.

Pupils enjoy a range of opportunities to thrive outside the classroom. Days out enhance their learning. Residential trips develop their independence. Pupils from all year groups have a say in the running of the school through the school council. Year 6 pupils are excellent role models. The head boy and head girl act as ambassadors for the school when visitors arrive.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. It is carefully planned, from the early years through to Year 6. Pupils learn a broad range of subjects. At each stage, the curriculum sets out the essential knowledge and key vocabulary pupils should learn.

Teachers deliver the curriculum confidently. Typically, they use the start of a lesson to remind pupils of their previous learning. Pupils then use their prior knowledge to access new learning. As a result, pupils build up expertise in each subject over time. In physical education (PE), for example, pupils learn different ways of passing a ball. They apply their skills initially in netball and later in handball.

Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly in lessons. They adjust their teaching to address any gaps or misconceptions that emerge. In subjects such as reading, writing and mathematics, curriculum leaders use teachers' checks to identify weaknesses in the curriculum and to make improvements. This does not happen routinely in all subjects. The school has refined its checking system in some other subjects. More time is needed for this to lead to improvements in the curriculum.

Children develop a love of reading from the moment they start school. Throughout the school, pupils encounter a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts. They are encouraged to appreciate high-quality writing and to be ambitious in their reading

choices. Pupils enjoy the way their teachers skilfully bring stories to life in whole-class reading sessions.

Phonics is well taught. In the Nursery class, children learn to recognise sounds through stories and games. During Reception and Year 1, pupils learn the letters and sounds they need to develop early reading skills. They take home books to practise these. Staff ensure pupils who might struggle get the extra help they need. The majority of pupils are fluent readers by the end of Year 2.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) accurately. Most of these pupils access the same curriculum as their peers, with appropriate adjustments. A small number of pupils with SEND receive highly individualised provision. The school works hard to enable all pupils with SEND to succeed. Leaders often liaise with other professionals, within the trust and beyond.

Pupils behave exceptionally well in the classroom. They listen carefully to their teachers. They are eager to participate in lessons. Pupils have a high degree of self-control. When lessons are lively, for example due to a practical activity such as playing the glockenspiel, pupils respond swiftly to teachers' signals for quiet.

There is a strong programme of personal development. Pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular clubs. These include choir and board games, as well as various sporting activities. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum teaches pupils about healthy lifestyles and positive relationships. The trust's 'Agora Pledge' promises all pupils several rich experiences before they leave the school. These include learning a musical instrument or helping others through volunteering.

Trust leaders, trustees and the governing board have a strong working knowledge of the school. They visit regularly. They check in with staff and pupils to extend their understanding of the school's priorities. Staff appreciate the training and networking opportunities offered by the trust. They feel valued and are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum leaders do not routinely use assessment information in the foundation subjects to inform improvements to the curriculum. As a result, the curriculum in these subjects may not be as effective as it could be. The school should ensure that curriculum leaders use the new assessment system in all subjects to inform any changes needed, so that pupils learn as well as the school would like them to. This system should not be overburdensome for staff.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	144907
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10288554
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Carol Shutkever
CEO of the trust	Rebecca Daulman
Executive headteacher	Jonny Spector
Website	www.albanwood.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	28 and 29 June 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Agora Learning Partnership Trust (formerly the Herts for Learning Multi Academy Trust). Alban Wood Primary School and Nursery joined the trust in September 2017.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with a range of leaders, including senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, governors, including the chair of governors,

trustees, including the chair of trustees, and the chief executive officer of the trust.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, music and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and spoke with some pupils about their learning. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work in English and history. The lead inspector listened to several pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation and policies. These included the school development plan and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's parent and staff questionnaires. They also spoke with pupils, parents and staff to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jonny Wallace

His Majesty's Inspector

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