

Inspection of Alfred Lord Tennyson School – 2 sites (Tennyson Rd and Alfred St)

Alfred Street, Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 9YS

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's 'RESPECT' values run consistently through this newly amalgamated school. Across both sites, pupils are expected to show resilience, empathy, self-awareness, passion, excellence, communication and teamwork. Pupils do their utmost to do this, both in classrooms and around the school.

Pupils are well looked after. They are kept safe. The well-tailored support that adults provide enables pupils to behave well and work hard. Pupils know how the 'calm zones', 'pit stops' and 'regulation stations' help them to control their emotions. They recognise that things do not always go smoothly. As one pupil said: 'Everyone can have a bad day, but it's important that you deal with it.' The 'discovery base' provides expert support for those pupils who, occasionally, might find social times tricky.

Pupils are looking forward to coming together on the same site. Older pupils know the importance of being positive role models for younger pupils. They are eager to do this more.

The school has high expectations for all pupils to achieve well. However, there are some aspects of the curriculum and teaching that mean that pupils still do not benefit from a consistently good quality of education.

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

Much progress has been made since the two predecessor schools amalgamated in September 2023. The school is now one, cohesive community. There have been many significant improvements. These include improvements: to the curriculum; teaching; behaviour; phonics; the provision for pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND); and the rate of suspensions, to mention but a few. The school is on an upward trajectory. It is driven by a clear vision and, at all levels, ambitious and determined leadership. The school has good capacity for continued improvement.

Pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read do well. The school's phonics programme is systematic and well organised. Staff training, along with continued support and challenge, has resulted in the programme being taught consistently well. Pupils remember the sounds that they have learned and use these to decode new and increasingly complex words. Any pupils who begin to fall behind are quickly identified and helped to keep up.

The school's curriculum has been fully overhauled. In many places, including in the early years, it is fit for purpose and well thought through. However, this work is at an early stage of being put in place. It has not yet resulted in pupils consistently remembering what they have been taught. Additionally, some weaknesses in curriculum design and teaching remain. In some subjects, the curriculum has been devised by bringing different resources together. The school has not ensured that these different elements are taught in a single, logical order. While, in the majority of cases, the quality of teaching is effective, there are some inconsistencies to be ironed out. In some lessons, pupils are

expected to complete a series of activities in a set order, regardless of what they know. This means that some pupils receive work that is too easy or too hard for them. Some do not get to move onto the activities that are designed to help them think more deeply about what they have learned.

Pupils with SEND achieve well. Their needs are fully understood and catered for. The targets that the school sets for these pupils are specific and measurable. Staff are skilled at providing the right sort of help at the right time.

Children get off to a good start in the early years. The curriculum sets out the important milestones that children are expected to achieve as they progress through the Nursery and Reception Years. Staff check carefully to make sure that anyone who begins to fall behind is helped to keep up. Learning in the early years is exciting. Children make good progress. They are well cared for.

The proportion of pupils at the school that speak English as an additional language has risen significantly over the last year. The school ensures that these pupils have the help needed to feel happy and learn, including when they are new to the English language.

The school's programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils are knowledgeable about a wide range of religions and cultures from around the world. They know that it is important to treat everyone equally. Pupils relish the diversity of their community and learning from each other.

At many levels, including governance, leadership is strong. Middle leaders have benefited from intensive training. However, some subject leaders are at an early stage of leading their subjects. As such, they have not yet fully influenced how well their subjects are taught and how well pupils learn the planned curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is at an early stage of implementation. In places, it is well planned and sequenced. However, it does not make clear which are the most important parts that pupils need to know and commit to their long term memory. As a result, there are inconsistencies in how well pupils recall what they have previously learned. The school should continue to embed its curriculum and ensure that it makes clear the most important content that pupils are expected to know and remember over time.
- In some subjects, curriculums have been developed by bringing different resources together. The school has not ensured that these resources align precisely to form one, coherent, progressive curriculum. In some places, content is not logically sequenced.

This means that there is some disjointedness in what pupils learn. The school should ensure that the content of its' curriculums is logically sequenced and builds cumulatively over time.

- In some lessons, pupils are expected to complete a series of tasks in a specific order. In these cases, some pupils receive work that is too easy or too hard for them. Some pupils do not get to undertake some of the tasks that are designed to help them think more deeply about what they have learned. The school should ensure that, in all lessons, pupils receive work that builds on what they know and can do.
- Subject leaders are at an early stage of leading their subjects. As such, they have not fully impacted on how well their subjects are taught and how well pupils learn the planned curriculum. The school should ensure that subject leaders fully execute their role, resulting in pupils knowing and remembering the content of the curriculum.

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	121857
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10288319
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	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Richard Scarfe
Headteacher	Kelly O'Connor
Website	www.alts.northants.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 December 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Alfred Lord Tennyson School-2 Sites was formed in September 2023 by the amalgamation of Alfred Street Junior School and Tennyson Road Infant School.
- The headteacher was previously headteacher at Alfred Street Junior School.
- The school is based on two sites. Key stage 2 is based at Alfred Street. Key stage 1 and the early years are based at the Tennyson Road site. There are plans in place to accommodate all pupils at the Alfred Street site from September 2025.
- The school makes use of one, registered alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that 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 the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, curriculum leaders, the inclusion manager, the family support worker and groups of staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: reading, mathematics, science and history. To do this, they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils’ work and met with teachers and pupils. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. He also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View. They considered the responses to Ofsted’s staff survey.
- 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 school documents, including those relating to governance, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors scrutinised leaders’ plans for improvement and their assessment of the school’s effectiveness.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils at breaktimes, in the dining hall and on the playground.

Inspection team

Vic Wilkinson, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Mark Westmoreland

Ofsted 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 2024