

# Alexandra Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102578
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kingston Upon Thames
<b>Inspection number</b>	308054
<b>Inspection date</b>	1 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christopher Gray

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	232
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr A Mehta
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs R Hollis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	Alexandra Road Kingston Upon Thames KT2 6SE
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8546 7176
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8549 8040

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<b>Age group</b>	3-7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how well pupils in each class progress, especially boys in mathematics; the effectiveness of middle managers and pupils' personal development. He gathered evidence from records of pupils' attainment, samples of pupils' past work, observations in lessons and round the school, meetings with staff, governors and pupils and an analysis of the 85 responses to the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is similar in size to most of its type. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than average as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English. Most pupils are fluent English speakers. A smaller than average proportion of pupils have statements of educational need or have been identified with learning difficulties. The two largest groups are pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those with speech, language and communication problems.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where pupils reach exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave Year 2. Outstanding teaching enables pupils to make full use in a range of subjects of the skills they learn, such as literacy and computer skills, with the result that pupils' achievement is outstanding. Parents clearly have every confidence in the school and appreciate how well the staff involve them in its work. There was not even a single disagreement with any of the statements in the parents' questionnaire; one parent summed up the many messages of praise by saying, 'Alexandra Infant School is a wonderful start to a child's educational years'.

Outstanding leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. Maintaining a high-performing school at consistent levels is no easy matter and the new headteacher is continuing to ensure this long-term success. One parent wrote, 'An excellent school going from strength to strength under the new head'. Leadership and accountability are well devolved among all staff. For example, the English and mathematics coordinators are implementing new initiatives aimed at making standards even higher. Daily 'Phonics Fun' sessions have enabled teaching to be directed with precision at individual needs. The impact of this is already evident in the movement of pupils between ability groups and the consequent better understanding of the pupils' progress. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation. Governors bring a good range of professional skills to the school and are minutely involved in planning and holding it to account. The success of plans for extended school services shows an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their enormous enjoyment of school is evident in the large quantity of work in their books, showing great pride in presentation and effort. A Year 2 science lesson took place over a whole morning. Before play, pupils experimented with forces such as magnetism and wind power. They discussed why a windmill would not turn in both directions. After play, they set about writing up their experiments. The standard of language they use in such work is exemplified by another write-up, where one person wrote, 'I think that, if the bean is in darkness, it will grow just a little and then it will die'. This demonstrates that pupils have a strong grounding for the next stage of their education.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. They know that this is for life, not just at school; when asked for examples of how to be safe, one of the youngest pupils replied 'Always wear your seat belt in the car'. The school council and the eco-group are keen to make the school a better place, and even non-members agree that they do a good job. Behaviour is good; most pupils behave very well but pupils say there are a few who sometimes forget what is expected. This can be seen when noise levels occasionally rise too much in lessons.

Teaching, learning and the curriculum are outstanding. Teachers' planning is constantly revised to take account of pupils' learning, so that opportunities are rarely missed to explain again or develop further, according to pupils' needs. Special topics bring extra dimensions to the curriculum, such as that on Chinese New Year, when pupils made their own army of terracotta warriors (in miniature). Pupils enjoy the many visits and the good range of extra-curricular activities. These add to and extend pupils' experiences, as in the clubs for French and art.

An outstanding quality of care, guidance and support is offered to pupils and extended to their families. Before a three-year-old starts school, he or she and the whole family can visit the school and see over its facilities. One parent commended this: 'The staff make a huge effort

to get to know the family of the child'. The governors work with the governing body of the junior school in an effort to meet the needs of local families, for example, for those who speak little English. Academic guidance is given to pupils in the high quality of teachers' marking of their work. Assessment procedures are rigorous and designed to make sure that pupils are working at their full potential. This means that the school is able to set and achieve realistic and high targets.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children begin in the Nursery with skills that are a little above average. In knowledge and understanding of the world, their skills are higher because many children are frequently taken out at home to visit places of interest. This gives them a good sense of inquisitiveness. Their personal development is broadly average and a few children have to learn how to share and cooperate. Children make good progress across the Foundation Stage. Assessment of learning is thorough, though the school has not yet implemented its method of evaluating how much progress each child makes from his or her start in school. The outdoor area for Nursery is large and attractive; that for Reception is adequate but less spacious and provides for a greater number of children. This is to be equalised in the forthcoming building works. Free access to the outdoor area has been developed only in the current year, and the Foundation Stage leader is introducing greater creativity and opportunities for independent learning into planning in readiness for the new Foundation Stage curriculum.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Complete the plans to introduce greater creativity into the Foundation Stage curriculum and implement procedures for evaluating children's progress.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No



## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alexandra Infant School, Kingston Upon Thames, KT2 6SE

My visit to your school was made even better when I discovered how many of you knew my name. It made me feel so welcome. Thank you for sharing your work and your thoughts with me. I just wish the weather had been better.

A large number of your parents wrote to me to tell me how good your school is. One of the groups of children I met said they would give it ten out of ten. I was able to see that you go to an outstanding school - that means, it is really special. The adults, your parents and all of you work hard to make it so. I could see this when I looked at your books - they are full of interesting and well written work. You behave well and you hardly ever miss school. Teachers make your lessons a lot of fun. I could see this during the day and you told me that this was one of the things you like best. Art and lunchtimes were also very popular with another group I spoke to.

Your headteacher and her staff make sure that the school runs smoothly and that you are able to learn to the best of your ability. They look after you very carefully. When I asked who you would speak to if you had a problem, I was very interested to hear one person mention her friends. You all said that the adults would be certain to help too.

The children in the Nursery have their beautiful garden to work and play in. Reception's garden is quite a bit smaller. The adults are planning how the whole area might best be shared. They are also making changes to the lessons in the Foundation Stage to give the children more opportunities to find out for themselves.

One of the parents who wrote to me said that her daughter in the Nursery loves going to school. 'She talks about her day endlessly when she comes home and looks forward to the next.' I hope you will all continue to get so much out of your schooling.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Gray

Lead Inspector