

# Alexander McLeod Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131841
<b>Local Authority</b>	Greenwich
<b>Inspection number</b>	315877
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Madeleine Gerard

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	470
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs M Newnes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr L P Cawthorne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 July 2002
<b>School address</b>	Fuchsia Street London SE2 0QS
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8311 2266
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8311 2939

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very high, and the percentage who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language is well above average. Over a third of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities, which is much higher than average; fifteen have statements of special educational need. The school has the Chartermark for Inclusion and Bronze Eco-School status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Alexander McLeod Primary is a satisfactory school. From generally below expected levels of skills on entry into the Reception classes, children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. Achievement is satisfactory across the school as a whole, although, because of the uneven quality of teaching, it is not consistently so across all classes. In Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. They reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6 and meet challenging targets. However, over recent years the proportions of pupils gaining both average and above average levels at the end of Year 2 has been lower than nationally, and achievement has been unsatisfactory. Effective action is now being taken to tackle the reasons for this. This, together with the school's success in raising standards by the end of Year 6, shows the school's satisfactory capacity to improve. In addition, pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is being tracked more closely, and there is good additional support for those falling behind. Nevertheless, there is still too much variation in the quality of teaching in those years. Pupils' progress slows, for example, when assessment information is not used consistently well to plan the next steps in pupils' learning, and challenge them adequately enough. Marking of pupils work is also inconsistent because it does not always identify clearly what pupils need to do to improve their work.

This is a caring, happy and inclusive school. Staff know the pupils very well and work hard to meet their pastoral needs. Strong links with a wide range of outside agencies ensure vulnerable pupils are well supported. School-based learning mentors make a valuable contribution to this work ensuring all pupils are well cared for. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. One parent commented, 'I put the success of my children at secondary school down to the primary education and good start provided at Alexander McLeod.' Pupils' satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills, as well as their ability to work with others, provides a sound grounding for future working life. They know how to keep safe and have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles. Pupils are enthusiastic to contribute to the school community, for example as 'eco-warriors' and members of the school council.

The good curriculum provides a firm foundation for pupils' learning, particularly in Key Stage 2. Changes to the way writing is taught such as 'big writing' and initiatives to raise standards in mathematics for older pupils are now being extended across the school in order to improve attainment in Key Stage 1. The curriculum also helps to ensure pupils' good personal skills because throughout the school it prioritises social and emotional development. There is a good range of lunchtime clubs including, chess, skipping, art, Eco Warriors and Challenge club which add significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school. One pupil said, 'I come to school to learn and because being at school is fun.'

All staff work well together and have a shared vision for the school. The headteacher is a good leader and is well supported by the deputy. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders monitor the work of the school but middle leaders are not yet fully part of the monitoring process. Consequently, teaching and learning is not consistently good enough to ensure pupils in all years make the progress of which they are capable.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Successful induction procedures for introducing the children and their parents to the school help children to settle quickly. Information from assessment of pupils' progress is used well to plan suitable work for individuals and groups. Good communication with parents ensures they know what work their children are doing in school and how they can help them at home. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. As a result of changes to the way phonics are taught and by ensuring tasks appeal to the children's interests, achievement is good, and most children reach the goals expected of them by the start of Year 1. Links between the Reception and Key Stage 1 are not established early enough in the year to ensure children are well prepared for transition to Year 1.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the levels of attainment in English and mathematics especially in Key Stage 1 by ensuring that teaching and learning are consistently good.
- Extend the roles of middle leaders to focus on the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Make better use of assessment in Key Stage 1 to plan the next steps in pupils' learning and make consistently clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Standards by the end of Year 6 have risen over recent years and since 2005 pupils have left the school with average standards in English and mathematics. Standards in science were still well below average in 2005 but have improved since then and were broadly average in 2007. From pupils' below average starting points this represents good progress. Pupils' current work and the school's own data show that most pupils are on course to meet their targets. However, pupils have not been making similarly good progress in Key Stage 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 have not been high enough in reading, writing and mathematics. Specific targeted work and support are now used effectively in Years 1 and 2 to raise achievement and standards. The school's assessment data and work in pupils' books suggests the situation is now improving. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and pupils learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress overall as a result of the support they receive.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

The pupils' good personal development is reflected in the quality of relationships between adults and pupils and their positive attitudes towards learning. They behave well in lessons and throughout the school. Pupils enjoy raising money for charity. They have been successfully taught how to keep safe and make healthy choices. For example, the school council is proud that there are 'friendship benches' in the playground as a result of their suggestions, and that fruit is available for older pupils. One pupil commented, 'In this way everyone gets their five pieces of fresh fruit and vegetables every day.' Pupils have a good understanding of world religions and different cultures, which is successfully developed through thoughtful assemblies,

interesting visitors, and visits to a wide variety of local religious centres. Attendance is satisfactory. Despite the fact that the school has a number of appropriate strategies in place to monitor and improve attendance, there are many absences which have a negative impact on some pupils' learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In Years 3 to 6, lessons move along at a brisk pace. Teaching ensures pupils are set a variety of interesting tasks and work is well planned to challenge pupils, including the more able. However, in some lessons, in Years 1 and 2 in particular, teaching is not based closely enough on assessment to match work effectively to pupils' needs. Explanations are not always clear and as a result the pace of learning slows. Older pupils particularly enjoy some good opportunities to discuss their learning in pairs and small groups. This helps to develop their self-confidence and self esteem. Targeted support for individuals and small groups in Key Stage 2 ensures that many pupils who find learning difficult, as well as those who are learning English as an additional language, make good progress. Similar help for pupils is now being used in Years 1 and 2 although there has not been enough time to see the effectiveness of this action.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good use is made of local facilities to develop pupils' computing skills. Through links with the local university, more able pupils are well involved in a range of lively and interesting challenges. Other strong features of the curriculum include music, drama, French and swimming. Good opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting activities help pupils to develop positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy. There are some links between subjects which help to make learning more relevant. For example, pupils in Year 6 studying time zones in mathematics were developing their understanding of different countries around the globe. However, opportunities for pupils to make creative and practical use of their literacy and numeracy skills across a wide range of other subjects are not consistent.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support, overall, are satisfactory. However, pastoral care is good. Well-developed links with a wide range of outside agencies ensure that all pupils, including the most vulnerable and those with more complex needs, receive effective individualised support, as their good personal, social and emotional development shows. Pupils are in no doubt they can report any concerns to an adult and that they will be dealt with quickly and effectively. Child protection procedures are secure and regularly updated.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. There are good systems to check up on how well pupils' are doing. However this information is not used consistently throughout the school to make sure teaching always meets the needs of all learners so that they make good progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher provides good leadership and has developed an enthusiastic and committed senior team. All leaders share a sense of purpose and common values which include raising standards throughout the school. Monitoring and evaluation systems lead to the identification of appropriate development needs. They have rightly identified the need to improve pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 and to raise attainment for these younger pupils. However, monitoring does not involve all leaders and has not yet secured consistently high quality teaching and learning in order to raise standards by the end of Year 2. Governors are supportive and know the school well. They offer sound challenge to the school and are developing their role as 'critical friend'.

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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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

7 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alexander McLeod Primary School, London, SE2 0QS

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You were very polite and friendly and this helped us to learn a lot about your work and your school. Your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that we found some good things in the school but also some things to improve.

- You are kind to each other and get on well together.
- You behave well and enjoy school.
- You are well looked after so you feel safe and happy.
- The youngest children get off to a good start in Reception.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress.
- There are many exciting lunchtimes activities which you enjoy.

We have asked the school to ensure that pupils in Years 1 and 2 do as well as other pupils by ensuring that teachers always plan tasks that will help you to move up to the next level in your work. This will include making sure that teachers give you more ideas about how to improve your work when they mark your books. You can help by coming to school regularly and on time, and continuing to work hard.

Thank you again for helping us.

Best wishes for the future,

Madeleine Gerard

Lead Inspector