

Alexander First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109884
Local Authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	337388
Inspection dates	1–2 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Molly Baker
Headteacher	Ms N K Summerfield
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2007
School address	Kenneally Oakley Green Windsor SL4 4XP
Telephone number	01753 852894
Fax number	01753 620795
Email address	alexander@rbwm.org

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Nine lessons or part lessons were observed and six teachers were seen. The inspection team observed the school's work and examined its policies, assessments, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. Discussions were held with the acting headteacher, staff, governors, pupils and parents. The inspectors analysed 51 questionnaires from parents and carers, and others from staff and pupils.

Inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- How well children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are progressing in language, literacy and social skills.
- The effectiveness of actions to improve writing, particularly for the more able.
- How well pupils who join the school other than at the normal times are supported so they can make good progress.
- The impact of pupil mobility on attainment by the end of Year 4.

Information about the school

Alexander First is a much smaller-than-average primary school located in an area of army housing. The vast majority of pupils are from families serving in the armed forces with many of their parents serving for periods in Afghanistan. Most pupils are from a White British background and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The nature of these difficulties lies mainly in the areas of emotional, and speech, language and communication difficulties. The frequent posting of army personnel to different locations means that there is a high proportion of pupils who leave and join the school at other than the usual times. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in Nursery and Reception. At the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher was covering the long-term absence of the permanent headteacher. A senior teacher is part of the senior leadership team.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Alexander First School has maintained the strengths identified in the previous inspection report. This is a good school. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. The positive atmosphere and good care, guidance and support contribute to pupils' good personal outcomes. Effective procedures are established to help ensure that pupils who join the school at other than the normal starting points settle quickly. Partnerships with parents and carers have improved and the school provides good support to pupils and their families who face challenging circumstances. Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills below those levels expected for their age. Their language and social skills are often at low levels. Considerable emphasis is placed on developing language, literacy and social skills. Children make good progress in all areas of learning. Pupils continue to make good progress through Years 1 to 4 and attainment in the current Year 4 is above average. Strategies to improve pupils' performance in writing are working well. However, opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to apply and develop their writing skills in other subjects. Teachers establish good relationships with their class. They make the purpose of the lessons clear. Pupils are keen learners who respond well to teachers' clear instructions and questioning. Pupils are set targets in literacy and numeracy to guide their learning but these are not always sharply matched to their needs. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities including clubs, visits and visitors.

Pupils are friendly, courteous and relate well to adults and to their peers. Behaviour is generally good in lessons and around the school. Pupils show a first-rate understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They make good contributions to the school and to the wider community by serving on the school council and raising funds for various national and overseas charities. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The acting headteacher and senior teacher are doing a good job. Effective leadership and good teamwork among the staff have enabled the school to continue to function well in the absence of the headteacher. Self-evaluation is systematic and the school takes positive action to bring about improvements. Since the last inspection, there have been good improvements to pupils' performance in writing, the partnership with parents and carers, and the design of the curriculum. This demonstrates that there is a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the positive drive on improving pupils' writing by providing more

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their writing skills in other subjects.

- Sharpen pupils' learning targets in literacy and numeracy so they are specifically matched to pupils' individual needs.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils are achieving well and clearly enjoy their time at school. Attainment fluctuates because of the small numbers in each year group and the high proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the normal times. Evidence from pupils' work, assessment information and the lessons seen, indicate that attainment in the current Year 4 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who remain with the school for a long time and those who are there for a short time make good progress. Pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English receive well-targeted support and make good gains in acquiring and applying their English skills. Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they are given suitable work and receive effective support from teaching assistants.

Interesting opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss a range of topics in pairs or small groups. They make good progress in speaking and listening and the good quality discussions generate ideas for writing. Pupils make good progress in reading and enjoy the wide range of books available. Improving writing, particularly for the more able, is a school priority and good progress is being made. In Year 1, pupils are beginning to join their letters as they write simple sentences to create their own version of The Very Hungry Caterpillar. By Year 4, pupils' handwriting is well formed, legible and joined. They produce interesting stories and write for a range of purposes. The more able pupils are structuring sentences into paragraphs. Writing is often imaginative and captures the reader's attention. Pupils perform well in mathematics because activities are well tailored to their needs. In a good Year 3/4 lesson, pupils gathered data within the class about pupils' shoe size and favourite foods. More able pupils decided how best to record and present their data. Bar charts were used well to present and interpret their findings. Some used a computer program competently to create clear and colourful graphs.

Pupils show consideration and respect for others and work well collaboratively on a range of tasks. They feel safe and well cared for at school. Pupils are also confident that there is always a trusted adult they can turn to if they are upset or worried.

Relationships and pupils' behaviour are good across the school. Pupils thrive on additional responsibility. Play leaders support fellow pupils well in the playground. Those on the school council take their responsibilities seriously. For example, they have made a valuable contribution to improving the outdoor play equipment. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives. Their personal and social skills are well developed. They make good progress in acquiring and applying literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Attendance levels are broadly average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils are attentive and keenly interested in their learning. Some pupils told an inspector, 'We come here to learn and to play with our friends.' Teachers convey clear expectations of learning. They use questioning effectively to challenge pupils and check their understanding. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their work. In the main, teachers use assessment information well to plan teaching and match tasks to pupils' abilities. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress. Occasionally, in some subjects such as history, there is an over-dependence on worksheets which require a limited written response from the pupils. These activities are not sufficiently challenging for all pupils and can impede opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces of work. Those who need additional support with language, literacy or numeracy receive effective help from teaching assistants.

The curriculum promotes good academic progress and contributes well to pupils' personal outcomes. Good attention is given to developing reading, writing and mathematics skills. Teaching and learning are well supported by ICT. The school is developing an interesting curriculum with good links between subjects which adds meaning and relevance to pupils' learning. Visits and visitors enrich the curriculum well. Healthy lifestyles are promoted extremely well and all pupils have good opportunities to cook healthy meals and participate in regular exercise. Popular clubs include cooking, gymnastics, homework and tag rugby.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Effective quality care, support and guidance are at the heart of the school's ethos and contribute well to pupils' personal outcomes. Effective induction procedures enable new pupils to settle quickly. Good support is given to pupils and their families, particularly where pupils have emotional and social difficulties; as some parents/carers commented: 'We appreciate all the good work by the staff' and 'Teachers always have time for you.' Workshops and sessions in sharing learning, numeracy and letter sounds are successfully helping parents to support their children's learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders, with staff, have established a welcoming school climate and have developed good partnerships with parents and carers and outside agencies. Leaders and managers have created an effective provision and achieve good outcomes for pupils. In a school of this size, the small number of staff have many responsibilities, which are appropriately distributed. Staff have a clear overview of what the school does well and the areas in need of improvement. Assessment systems have improved and provide a clear picture of how well pupils are performing. Effective action has been taken improve pupils' writing, the partnership with parents and carers, ICT provision and the range of the curriculum.

Governors are supportive and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the challenges of a changing pupil population. They hold the school to account by providing constructive challenge. Statutory requirements are met and there are appropriate procedures to protect and safeguard pupils. However, senior staff and governors are not always working closely enough together in checking the implementation of new safeguarding requirements. Equality is promoted well and discrimination is tackled effectively.

Community cohesion is promoted well. The school has a good understanding of the transient community it serves through careful monitoring and the good relationships established with parents and the community. Different cultures and faiths are promoted effectively through the curriculum and pupils participate well in local events. Overseas partnerships are being formed to further increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures and life in the wider world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and management have maintained and built on the good provision identified in the last inspection. Effective induction arrangements and good partnerships with parents enable children new to the Nursery and those who join the Early Years Foundation Stage later to settle quickly. Adults establish good relationships with the children. The children grow in confidence and relate well to adults and to their peers. Children feel safe, secure and well cared for because of the good attention given to care and welfare. They make good progress in their personal and social development. Assessment information is used well to plan teaching and learning. Good teaching and an interesting range of learning activities enable children to make good progress in all areas of learning. However, some learning resources are tired and the school has plans to replace these items. Good attention is given to developing speaking, listening, reading and early writing skills. There is good modelling by adults and children have good opportunities to practise these basic skills. They make good gains in these core areas, in some cases, from low starting points. Outdoor leaning activities are not always sufficiently linked to a main theme or to the learning inside but the school is working to improve this aspect of its work.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The vast majority who returned them are happy with their child's experience at the school. They are particularly pleased with care in the school and the sense of enjoyment, children's safety and the quality of teaching. The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. A small minority of parents do not believe that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that most pupils are well behaved because of the clear expectations and good relationships established by staff. However, inspectors agree that a small minority of pupils present challenging behaviour but think that this is managed well by staff. However, the school is not complacent and senior staff and governors are keen to deal with any parents' concerns and suggestions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alexander First School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 51 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 88 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	65	18	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	57	21	41	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	47	26	51	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	33	32	63	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	29	57	21	41	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	49	23	45	3	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	35	33	65	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	31	31	61	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	47	25	49	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	31	27	53	7	14	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	29	30	59	3	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	29	30	59	4	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	53	23	45	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

16 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alexander First School, Windsor SL4 4XP

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found. Yours is a good school.

These are the school's main strengths.

- You really enjoy school.
- The school is a welcoming and pleasant place in which to learn.
- You are making good progress because of the good teaching you receive.
- Your school provides you with a good range of learning activities including clubs and visits.
- You get on well with each other and most of you behave well.
- You have a first-rate understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- You feel safe at school because the teachers and other adults take good care of you and provide good support and guidance.
- Your families receive good support from the school.
- You make good contributions to the school and to the wider community.
- The school is well led and managed.

We have asked the headteacher and teachers to do a few things to make the school even better by:

- improving your writing skills by giving you more opportunities to apply these skills in other subjects
- matching the learning targets set in literacy and numeracy more carefully to your needs.

You can help by continuing to work hard. Finally, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.