

# Alexandra Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130358
<b>Local Authority</b>	Haringey
<b>Inspection number</b>	341032
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Wynford Jones

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	213
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Joel Brookfield
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Jane Flynn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Western Road Wood Green London N22 6UH
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## Introduction

### Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 18 lessons and attended one assembly. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe, the school improvement plan and 99 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at:

- the progress of different groups of pupils in English, mathematics and science
- the impact of teaching and the curriculum in accelerating the rate of pupils' progress in mathematics in Key Stage 1 and in writing and science throughout the school
- how well the pupils know and understand their next steps for improvement
- the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in driving school improvement.

## Information about the school

Alexandra Primary is broadly average in size. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background is considerably higher than that found in most schools. The main groups are of Black African or Caribbean origin. The proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their first language is well above the national average. There are approximately 38 different home languages represented within the school. Similarly, the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who hold a statement of special educational needs, is above the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is significantly higher than the national average. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual starting and leaving times is greater than that found in most schools.

The school holds the Sports Active Mark award.

The headteacher was appointed as interim headteacher in September 2007 and became substantive headteacher in April 2008. The deputy headteacher took up the position in September 2008.

There is an onsite after-school club. It was inspected separately.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Alexandra Primary is a satisfactory, but rapidly improving, school. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and in Years 1 to 6 pupils' progress is accelerating and attainment is rising. The 2009 Year 6 national tests results were broadly average, reflecting satisfactory achievement and a marked improvement on previous years when outcomes were exceptionally low and the majority of pupils underachieved. Scrutiny of current Year 6 pupils' work and the school's detailed assessment information shows that pupils are on track to attain similar, and possibly higher, standards. The improvements in outcomes can be attributed to the dedication, determination and vision of the recently appointed headteacher, the effective support of the deputy headteacher and the restructuring of the leadership team.

The leadership team has focused on raising expectations and improving the quality of teaching. Although many pupils are now making good progress, it is not consistent throughout the school. Pupils make the best progress in the Nursery and in Years 5 and 6, where teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. In the outstanding lessons teachers use questioning skills extremely well to challenge and consolidate pupils' learning. They promote subject-specific vocabulary and develop the pupils' thinking skills. In other year groups teaching, and as a result pupils' progress, is more varied and in many lessons is only satisfactory. During the last two years, much has been done to improve assessment procedures and to ensure pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. Marking in pupils' English books provides clearer guidance on the next steps for improvement than that found in other subjects. At senior management level, assessment information is analysed rigorously to monitor pupils' progress, to set challenging targets and to identify pupils needing additional support.

The school has rightly identified that many of the more able pupils are not attaining as well as they should in mathematics by the end of Year 2, that boys' writing throughout the school is an area of relative weakness and that attainment in science is below the expected level. As a result, the staff have reviewed the curriculum to ensure it encompasses all statutory requirements and is tailored to meet the interests of the pupils. Several initiatives have been introduced to encourage boys to write, to challenge the more able, and, to promote pupils' understanding of scientific investigations. These initiatives have yet to be consolidated but are beginning to have an impact on attainment. The curriculum is good and provides a well-defined structure to promote learning. It effectively supports pupils' personal development. Pupils have a positive attitude to school. Several proudly quoted the school motto, 'Aspire, Achieve and Enjoy'. They behave well in lessons and around the school and at times their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils contribute much to the school and the local community. They are

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developing a good understanding of how to stay healthy. Many speak knowledgeably about healthy eating and know the importance of taking regular exercise. They feel safe and relaxed in school because the school provides a good level of care and guidance for its pupils. Staff know the pupils well and relationships are good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are supported effectively. As a result, they feel included in the life of the school.

The chair of governors and the senior leadership team work together effectively. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school development plan lists appropriate actions to bring about further improvement. The governing body is becoming increasingly effective in undertaking its role and has taken difficult staffing decisions. Links with parents and the local community are good. Parents are welcomed into the school. The school offers parents the opportunity to learn to use computers and to enhance their literacy and numeracy skills. The vast majority of parents are very pleased with the changes brought about by the new leadership team. Community cohesion is promoted effectively and contributes much to the calm ethos of this culturally diverse school. The marked improvements over the last two years, the clear vision for future developments, and the enthusiasm and drive of the senior leadership team provide the school with good capacity for further improvement.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment by:
  - accelerating the rate of boys' progress in writing by consolidating and extending the recently introduced strategies
  - providing greater challenge for the more able mathematicians in Key Stage 1
  - ensuring all pupils further develop their use and understanding of subject-specific vocabulary and their ability to undertake investigations in science.
- Ensure that all teaching is consistently of a good or better standard by:
  - providing greater challenge for all pupils, but especially the more able
  - ensuring questioning strategies are used more effectively during whole-class teaching to consolidate and extend pupils' learning
  - extending the good marking practices in English to other subjects.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils enjoy coming to their school and are proud of it. Attendance is rising and is now similar to the national average. In discussions with the inspectors, pupils said how much the school had improved and that the teachers make their lessons 'interesting and fun'. As a result, most pupils work with sustained concentration and commitment. They are developing their speaking and listening skills well and welcome the opportunities to

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discuss points with a 'talk partner' and share their ideas. This, in addition to contributing much to their social development, is promoting effectively the pupils' use of language. When writing, most pupils' choice of vocabulary remains cautious and many are uncertain of their spelling. Nevertheless, the school's focus on improving attainment in writing is beginning to have an impact. The rate of pupils' progress is accelerating as teachers' expectations rise and pupils increasingly practise their writing skills in other subjects. Pupils are developing their reading skills well, and are making good progress because of the well-targeted additional support.

Pupils are developing their investigation skills in mathematics and science well. They are becoming more confident in undertaking these activities as they are given more opportunities to undertake practical work and to record the outcomes. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their various starting points and needs. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are making at least satisfactory progress. The difference in performance between boys and girls is narrowing as the impact of the school's work to accelerate boys' progress begins to take effect. However, the more able pupils are some way from reaching their potential because of previous limitations in provision.

Pupils' commitment to sporting activities has enabled the school to gain the Sports Active Mark award and to submit an application for Healthy School status. Pupils value their school community. They are keen to become members of the school council and to act as 'playground peer mediators'. Pupils readily engage with other pupils from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds and are developing a good understanding of other cultures. This is helping to prepare them well for living in today's society. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' satisfactory basic skills provide pupils with an adequate basis for the next stage in their education and later life.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>

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

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<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>3</b>
	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Relationships between adults and pupils are good. Pupils want to please their teachers. Most lessons are well planned. There is a clear structure and the work for different ability groups is identified. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are confident in the use of computers to support learning. Teachers share with pupils the learning objective and provide clear explanations. In the outstanding lessons, pupils' initial answers are probed and their thinking is consolidated and extended. The lessons proceed at a quick pace and there is good balance between the teacher's and the pupils' contributions. This exemplary practice is not evident in enough of the teaching. In some lessons groups of pupils, particularly during the whole class teaching sessions, are not challenged, the pace slows and teachers do not take the opportunity to consolidate basic skills.

Assessment strategies to support learning are developing well. Changes to the marking procedures are being implemented with reasonable consistency and pupils are being provided with appropriate guidance to improve their work. Marking in English is sharper and more informative than in other subjects. Targets are set in English and mathematics but not in other subjects. These targets are not routinely reinforced in other lessons.

The curriculum provides effective opportunities for learning, with a clear focus on developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills through other subjects. Pupils particularly enjoy their art, music and physical education lessons. Pupils are learning to speak Spanish. Additional resources are used effectively to support pupils who find learning difficult and those who speak English as an additional language. The curriculum is enhanced by good links with numerous organisations and a good range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits. There is a high take-up for most activities.

The care provided for pupils ensures that the school successfully supports the most vulnerable pupils. The school works effectively with a wide range of agencies to promote pupils' learning and welcomes parental involvement. Attendance is monitored systematically. Any absence is followed up quickly.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>3</b>
	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher knows the school well. She has high aspirations and is successfully leading the school forward following a difficult time in its history. Much has been accomplished in the last two years. This includes the appointment of an effective deputy and the re-allocation of key subject responsibilities. Systems and structures have been put into place to enable the leadership team to monitor and rigorously analyse the work of the school. Staff are challenged when there is underperformance. As a result, pupils' progress is accelerating and standards are rising as the quality of teaching continues to improve. Governors reflect seriously on their roles and responsibilities. They are increasingly effective in holding school leaders to account as they compare the school's performance with schools nationally. They set suitably challenging targets and monitor the work of the school closely. They ensure that safeguarding and child protection procedures are good and implemented consistently. The governors monitor the effectiveness of equality of opportunity policies and check to ensure that the gaps between the different groups are closing.

The governors and senior staff have done much to promote the school locally. Parents and carers are more involved and their views are valued. Working with outside agencies, the school has successfully developed links with the local community and businesses. Pupils and staff are looking forward to a visit from teachers from a school in Pretoria. The school is gradually reducing its financial deficit and provides satisfactory value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	<b>2</b>
	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>

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<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Relationships with parents are good. Parents are very pleased with the provision. They say that their children feel safe, settle quickly and develop their self-confidence. This is as a result of good induction arrangements and the emphasis the staff place on ensuring the welfare of the children. Children form good relationships with the adults and behave well as they enjoy their work and play together. Staff use their good understanding of how young children learn to plan a good range of stimulating activities that maintain the children's interests. However, the outstanding teaching in the Nursery is not capitalised on sufficiently as the two classes do not plan and work together sufficiently closely to ensure continuity of provision and procedures. Nevertheless, there is a good balance between activities led by adults and those initiated by children. Children are provided with good opportunities to experiment and explore within a safe and supportive environment. They follow routines which develop good hygiene practices and are learning how to stay healthy. Outdoor provision is used well by the Nursery class to promote the different areas of learning. However, building constraints make the outdoor area less accessible for children in the Reception class, thus restricting opportunities for children to develop their independence.

The early years coordinator has a good understanding of the children's needs. She monitors the work of the two classes appropriately and provides guidance to the staff.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

The vast majority of the responses from parents and carers were entirely supportive of the school's work. Their positive views are supported by the inspection evidence. The percentage of parents who felt that their child enjoyed, and is safe in, school was particularly high. Discussions with the pupils and their questionnaire responses confirm they feel safe and enjoy school. This is a reflection of the school's good safeguarding

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procedures and the level of care provided.

A very small minority did not feel that 'the school helps me to support my child's learning'. Inspectors found that links with parents are good; the school offers opportunities for parents to liaise with the class teacher and also provides opportunities for parents to learn alongside their children.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alexandra Primary 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 99 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 213 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	62	38	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	52	47	48	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	45	46	46	47	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	43	50	51	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	49	47	48	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	44	48	49	3	3	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	44	51	52	1	1	2	2
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)	40	40	50	51	0	0	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	37	57	58	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	38	53	54	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	39	54	55	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	47	48	45	46	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	54	41	41	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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



16 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alexandra Primary School, London NN22 6UH

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. We were very pleased to hear that you like coming to school. We found that your behaviour in lessons and around the school was good. You showed us that you are keen to take responsibility and that you all get on together well. You have a good understanding of healthy living and know a lot about keeping safe. We were impressed by your good contribution to the school community. You show respect for each other as you move safely around the school and in the playground. Well done!

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. You get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 6. However, your rate of progress is varied in the different classes. Your headteacher knows this and has been working with your teachers to make certain that all your lessons are good. They want you to catch up on some areas where you have not been achieving as well as you should. These include writing and undertaking investigations in mathematics and science.

To help you we have asked that your teachers concentrate on those areas and to really challenge those of you who find the work easy. We have also asked them to look at the ways some of the lessons are taught so that all teachers can learn from each other. In this way all your lessons will be interesting and will help you learn more quickly. We also suggested that the staff give you more guidance on what to do next when they mark your work.

Good luck for the future and thanks once again for being so friendly and polite.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

David Wynford Jones

Lead inspector

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