

Alderwood Primary School

Rainham Close, Eltham, London SE9 2JH

Inspection dates

14–15 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils’ outcomes at the end of Year 6 are too low. In 2015 pupils left the school with standards which were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils made inadequate progress across key stage 2, which meant that they were not well prepared for the next stage of education.
- Overall outcomes at the end of the Reception Year are above average. However, the progress children make from their various starting points in the early years is variable. Boys make less progress than girls.
- Although improving rapidly, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable. The progress pupils make is not consistently strong.
- There are gaps between the attainment of boys and girls across the school which leaders have not recognised or prioritised in improvement plans.

The school has the following strengths

- Since September 2015, the new leadership team has taken swift and robust action to tackle inadequate achievement. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving rapidly.
- Middle leaders are developing their skills well and are adding to the good capacity for improvement.
- Under the leadership of the new chair of the governing body, governors now provide good support and challenge to school leaders.
- Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check have improved over recent years and are above the national average.
- Pupils behave well. They are safe and cared for well. Staff care about pupils and want to help them to be successful learners.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils make good progress in the designated special provision for those diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder, and in the nurture provision.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure leaders' plans for improvement:
 - include a sharper focus on closing attainment gaps between boys and girls
 - result in actions which sustain the current pace of improvement to teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils' outcomes continue to improve swiftly.

- Improve quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - good practice is shared across the school
 - teachers and teaching assistants receive the training and support they need to improve their subject knowledge for teaching aspects of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) so that pupils understand how their phonics skills can help them in their writing
 - teachers use the school policy for written and verbal feedback to pupils effectively in all year groups so that pupils can move on to their next steps in learning
 - teachers set tasks which better meet the needs of the lower-attaining pupils, particularly boys, so they are not over-reliant on the support of teaching assistants
 - children in the early years use their developing early writing skills and number skills confidently during times when they are not directed to work with an adult.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since September 2015, the executive headteacher and the two co-headteachers have brought about rapid improvement to teaching, learning and assessment. They have eradicated inadequate teaching. The school has benefited greatly from its collaborative work with the six schools in The Compass Partnership. Assessment systems have been developed and embedded across the school, and training and support has been instrumental in bringing about improvements to teaching, learning and assessment.
- Middle leaders are developing their skills under the direction and support of senior leaders. They have helped to secure improved quality of teaching across the school and are clear on what they need to do next to further improve outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils recognise and value recent improvements to the curriculum, which include school projects, such as 'Dinosaurs' and 'Hamlet'. The high-quality writing and artwork on display throughout the school shows the impact of this work. Music provision has also been strengthened and adds to the broad curriculum which pupils enjoy. A variety of after-school clubs enrich the curriculum further. The school's values underpin the curriculum and these ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. British values are reflected throughout the curriculum and through the work of the school council and the playground 'mediators'.
- Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching rigorously and hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make. They have been relentless and successful in their drive to improve teaching. As a result, there has been significant staff turnover since their appointments. Newly qualified teachers are well supported by staff, senior leaders and their mentor. They value the feedback they are given to improve their skills.
- The local authority provides strong support to the school and was instrumental in securing the school's involvement in The Compass Partnership. It recognises the very good early impact the new leadership team has had on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders work well together to ensure that the designated special provision for pupils diagnosed with autistic disorder spectrum conditions meet the needs of these pupils. Similarly, leaders ensure that the nurture provision provides high-quality support for the pupils attending.
- The leader for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability has completed nationally accredited training and has a clear understanding of the strong progress that these pupils make. As a result, she is able to adapt interventions according to pupils' needs.
- During the current academic year the pupil premium funding has been spent effectively. The significant gaps which existed in previous years between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others are narrowing across the school. Work scrutinies in Year 6 show that gaps are closing rapidly.
- Leaders have ensured that the sports premium funding has been spent well to benefit pupils and to improve the quality of teaching. Pupils enjoy a good range of sports within and beyond the school day.
- Pupils feel safe and are cared for well. The majority of the small number of parents who spoke to inspectors or who completed the online survey Parent View, agree that their children feel safe at school. School documentation shows that leaders take swift and effective action if they have concerns about a pupil's safety or well-being.
- Leaders recognise that further training and support is needed to improve the teaching and assessment of phonics across the early years and key stage 1. They have rightly secured training and support from the local authority to support them with this.
- Leaders' plans to bring about school improvement are thorough. While plans rightly prioritise closing gaps in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others, they do not focus sufficiently on closing the gaps which still exist between the attainment of girls and boys in some classes across the school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is a strength of the school. Governors have been bold in their actions to bring about school improvement. They have an accurate view of the school's past and a clear vision for its future. They are very well led by the new chair of the governing body. They have worked effectively with the local authority to bring about the changes in leadership, which have begun to impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and on pupils' outcomes.
 - They monitor spending carefully and the checks they make on the impact of the use of the pupil premium funding and sports funding are rigorous.

- Governors support senior leaders in ensuring that staff are held to account for pupils' progress.
- Governors have a range of experience, skills and expertise, which they put to good use in supporting and challenging the school's performance. They are reflective and welcome challenge. They seek appropriate training to continually improve their skills.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Governors are well trained in safeguarding and carry out their responsibilities rigorously and effectively. Pupils' safety and well-being is at the heart of all they do to support and challenge the work of the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable.
- Teachers have implemented the school's marking and feedback policy in all year groups. However, sometimes comments made in books do not follow the school's policy and this does not support pupils' learning well enough. For example, pupils who are at the earliest stages of developing writing and mathematical skills are often faced with long, complex written comments on their work which they cannot read without help. Not all pupils understand the colour 'highlights' which are used by teachers in marking work. This means that feedback does not help them with next steps in learning and limits the progress that they make.
- Tasks set for lower-attaining pupils do not effectively meet their needs. In most year groups, lower-attaining pupils are given similar tasks to the rest of the class. They are often supported by adults to access the task, rather than being given a task designed to meet their specific next steps in writing, reading and mathematics. This sometimes means that pupils, particularly lower-attaining boys, are over-reliant on adult support and struggle if adults have to leave them to work alone. This was clear in a key stage 1 mathematics lesson.
- Pupils' attainment in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 is above the national average. The test focuses on pupils' ability to blend sounds together for reading. The subject knowledge of teachers' and teaching assistants' who are currently teaching in the school is variable. In some classes, adults demonstrate poor articulation of sounds. They are not effective in showing pupils how phonics skills can help them in writing. This means that lower-attaining writers are often not using the sounds they have been taught when they come to write. This limits the progress that they make. Assessment of pupils' progress through the phases of phonics is not sharp enough. Records are held by leaders but do not drive the teaching in lessons sufficiently.
- Teachers have worked hard to implement group activities to accelerate progress in reading. This has led to some improvements in pupils' progress across the school. However, in some classes, pupils who are not working with the teacher lose focus on their reading task and this has an impact on the progress they make. Where group reading leads to strong progress, texts are carefully matched to pupils' abilities. This was evident in Year 6, where all pupils were engaged and interested in the reading activities they were given. They were learning from each other as well as from the teacher and this led to rapid progress within the lesson.
- Teachers ensure that a wide range of mathematical concepts are taught across the year groups and there is evidence in books that the most able pupils are deepening their understanding. The most able pupils across the school are making good progress and those who left key stage 1 working at above age-related expectations are now building successfully on their strong attainment.
- When teaching leads to strong progress in lessons, teachers use questions skilfully to deepen understanding, to help pupils reflect on their learning and to challenge and extend pupils' skills and knowledge. This was evident in mathematics lessons observed in lower key stage 2, which helped pupils develop key mathematical facts as well as reasoning skills.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in the designated special provision are good. The environment is specifically designed to promote the learning of pupils diagnosed along the autistic spectrum. A wide range of effective communication strategies are used. Teachers are successful in actively engaging pupils in activities which are well matched to their needs and help them make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils in the nurture provision benefit from good teaching. Pupils have personalised plans in place which are rigorously monitored and the environment is welcoming and conducive to learning. Books show that pupils make steady progress from their starting points. Short-term tasks and skilful adult intervention support pupils to be successful in their learning.

- Support and interventions for pupils who have special educational needs or disability secure good progress from their starting points.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Positive relationships exist between adults and pupils in the school. Adults care about their pupils and want the best for them academically and personally.
- Pupils are polite, welcoming and respectful. The school's core values, such as respect, trust and kindness, underpin the work of the school, and pupils demonstrate these values well.
- Pupils' attitude to their work is generally positive. Very occasionally, when work set does not meet their needs or when they do not receive the support they have become used to, their attitudes are less positive and their attention wanders.
- Pupils feel safe in school and say that 'the teachers keep you safe'. They describe safe places they know they can go to if they are worried about anything. Pupils have a good understanding of e-safety, which is a focus in assemblies and lessons.
- The majority of parents who spoke to inspectors during the inspection and those who completed the online questionnaire Parent View stated that they felt their children were safe and that behaviour was generally good.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils generally behave well in classrooms, around the school and in the playground. As pupils put it, 'The playground's a great place. We have fun!' Pupils who are playground 'mediators' provide good role models and calmly sort out any potential conflicts. The school council made decisions about playground equipment to benefit all pupils.
- Pupils behave well in the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- School logs show that incidents of poor behaviour have reduced this academic year.
- Pupils attend well. Attendance is consistently in line with the national average. Any persistent absenteeism is followed up rigorously by the school and is usually the result of long-term sickness or a medical condition.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2 have declined since the previous inspection. Pupils who left the school in 2015 were almost three terms behind pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils were almost a term and a half behind other pupils in the school. Boys' attainment was almost two terms behind that of girls overall. The progress pupils made across key stage 2 was well below that seen nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards at the end of key stage 1 have been broadly average since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have ensured that teaching has improved this year and the legacy of underachievement has been halted.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has been slightly above the national average for the past two years. In 2015, there was a large gap between the achievement of boys and girls. This is a continuing trend in some areas of learning, particularly literacy.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check has improved over the last three years and is above average. The school's assessment data and first-hand inspection evidence shows that pupils will achieve similar results this year. However, observations of teaching and learning and book scrutinies indicate that some pupils are not confident in using their developing phonics skills to help them when they write.
- The school's own information about how well pupils are doing, together with work seen in books and learning observed in lessons, shows that many pupils in the school currently are making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Gaps in attainment between the disadvantaged pupils and others are closing rapidly, but gaps in attainment between boys and girls remain in some classes.

- The most able pupils currently are making good progress in all year groups. Progress of other pupils is variable. Lower-attaining pupils do not make consistently strong progress. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability have made good progress this year as a result of good, carefully targeted teaching to meet their needs.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Leaders have used support from the local authority and The Compass Partnership well to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years. However, the quality of teaching is variable, and this leads to variable progress.
- Leadership of the early years requires further improvement because leaders have not analysed assessment data effectively to identify gaps between the attainment of boys and girls and to review provision in order to narrow these gaps.
- Girls who left the Reception Year in 2015 were well prepared for Year 1, but boys left with significant gaps in learning in key areas of development, including literacy and mathematics
- Teachers plan thoroughly to cover all areas of learning. However, they do not ensure that all children take part in activities which will develop their early writing and number skills when they are not directed to work with an adult. For example, clipboards were set up for children to write on a technology theme in the outdoor learning environment. This was not an adult-led activity, and none of the children chose to do it. Teachers discuss the response to activities informally, but there is no effective system in place to ensure that all children benefit from activities in the areas of learning when they choose activities. As a result, some children, often boys, opt out of activities which require them to write or to read.
- Not all teachers and adults are confident in showing children how to apply their developing knowledge of phonics into writing. Weaknesses in subject knowledge and some poor articulation of sounds have a negative impact on children's progress. Typical of this was a group writing activity. Children made very early attempts at mark making with poor letter formation, as a result of weak teaching and poor articulation of sounds.
- Classrooms in the early years reflect all areas of learning well. In the Nursery class, early literacy skills and number skills are promoted and planned for in role play areas around the classroom. This emphasis is not developed so strongly in the Reception class. For example, the 'dinosaur' role play area gives little opportunity for children to apply their developing skills to an interesting theme.
- Not all adults are effective in questioning children to deepen their understanding or to make them think for themselves.
- Children in the early years benefit from the high-quality outdoor learning provision which gives them opportunities to explore the natural environment in a safe, contained wooded area. The children enjoy this experience and learn about many important life skills, such as map reading.
- Teachers keep records to chart children's progress through the early years. In the nursery class, learning journeys show some strong progress from starting points this year in all areas of learning. Records are kept electronically by Reception class staff. Books show variable progress in writing and number skills. However, gaps between the disadvantaged and other children are closing. Children who have special educational needs or disability make strong progress from their starting points.
- Children behave well in the early years. They are well cared for by adults and feel safe and valued in their care. The small number of parents who spoke to inspectors were happy with the progress their child was making.

School details

Unique reference number	100112
Local authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	10002003

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Jefferson
Executive Headteacher	Jo Gordon
Telephone number	0208 850 6841
Website	www.alderwood.greenwich.sch.uk
Email address	info@alderwood.greenwich.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 September 2013

Information about this school

- Alderwood is an average-sized primary school.
- The school joined The Compass Partnership of six local schools in September 2015.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is above average. This is additional government funding to support the achievement of those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background and speak English as a first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- There have been significant changes to the membership of the leadership team, to the governing body and to the teaching staff since the previous inspection. The executive headteacher took up her post in September 2015. She shares her time between Alderwood and another local school. The two co-headteachers also took up their positions in September 2015.
- Children in the early years are taught in two part-time Nursery classes and one full-time Reception class.
- The school has a designated special provision for pupils diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder.
- The school runs nurture group provision for pupils from schools in the local authority. The provision caters for pupils who are experiencing difficulties which impact on their behaviour for learning, their self-esteem or their ability to build appropriately positive relationships in the mainstream classroom.
- The school runs a breakfast and an after-school club.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups. Three observations were undertaken with the executive headteacher and the co-headteachers.
- Meetings were held with governors and with a representative of the local authority.
- Meetings were held with pupils to discuss their learning and their views on the school. Pupils took inspectors on a 'curriculum tour' of the school.
- All leaders met with inspectors to discuss their roles and the impact of their work.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to pupils in the lunch hall, in lessons, in the breakfast and after-school clubs and as they moved around the building.
- Inspectors attended a class assembly.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress across the school, improvement plans, curriculum plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined school records relating to safety and behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinized books in every classroom to see what progress pupils make and to look at the impact of the guidance teachers provide. Senior leaders together with inspectors scrutinised a range of books from across the school.
- Inspectors took account of 13 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and of information gathered from discussions with parents during the inspection. Inspectors also considered the school's own information from a recent parent questionnaire. There were no staff or pupil responses to the online questionnaire.

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