

Inspection of a good school: Alwyn Infant School

Mulberry Walk, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 6EU

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 November 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are safe and happy. They enjoy responsibilities such as being book monitors and 'helping hands' who support others in classrooms. Pupils learn about values such as respect and sharing. They understand how these relate to their experiences in school, such as feeding the school rabbits. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. Pupils understand how to keep safe, including learning about the early stages of their digital lives. This starts in Reception, where pupils begin to build appropriate knowledge of the potential dangers of time spent online. Pupils love their teachers and have very positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils work together kindly and thoughtfully respond to adults' questions and instructions.

Pupils are enthusiastic and highly motivated. Behaviour is a strength in lessons, around the school and on the playground. Pupils value the school's reward systems. They are excited by the chance to gain recognition in assemblies through initiatives such as 'Polite Parrot' and by being included on 'The Kindness Tree'. Pupils enjoy their learning. However, some curriculum subjects are not yet developed as fully as leaders intend. This means pupils do not yet learn as well as they should across the curriculum as a whole.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the previous inspection, the school has worked hard to strengthen the curriculum. In some subjects, such as mathematics and science, the school has precisely identified what pupils need to learn. Staff use carefully planned sequences of lessons to help pupils build their knowledge over time. In these subjects, staff have secure subject knowledge and teach the curriculum in effective ways. This is already having a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, in some subjects, such as geography, the school is not yet building pupils' knowledge effectively. The school has not consistently identified the precise knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn from the beginning of

Reception. Staff do not have efficient and effective approaches to check what pupils have learned. This means that there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding in some subject areas.

Staff are thoughtful in helping to prepare pupils for their next stage of education. Trips and visits help to make learning memorable, such as a trip to a model village linked to pupils' writing, and to a farm which helps pupils to learn about animals and conservation. Pupils talk about such events with excitement and enthusiasm. Staff have consistently high expectations for pupils' behaviour. In lessons, pupils are focused and engaged. Low-level disruption is rare. The school has a highly inclusive culture. Staff effectively use the training they receive linked to areas such as behaviour management. Staff understand the behaviour policy and their roles and responsibilities within it. The school is determined for all pupils to experience success. Pupils have high levels of attendance. If any pupils have barriers to their attendance, the school works closely with families and addresses these in supportive and effective ways.

The school prioritises phonics and early reading. Phonics teaching begins early in Reception. In phonics, staff precisely check how well pupils have learned, and give any pupils that have fallen behind extra practise so that they can catch up. Reading books that pupils take home match closely to the sounds that they have learned. Staff are implementing the phonics programme well. In early years, staff focus on communication and language effectively. They use stories and rhymes to help children develop their speaking and listening skills. Staff and children have very positive relationships.

The school identifies pupils with SEND quickly and ensures that these pupils get the additional support they need. The school works effectively with outside agencies to help staff understand how to support pupils' specific needs, for example through training on autism spectrum disorder. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve as well as other pupils. However, there is some further work to develop subject knowledge across the whole staff team and ensure that all pupils achieve consistently high outcomes.

Staff appreciate the school's efforts to support them with workload and well-being. Governors have very secure knowledge of how to effectively support and challenge the school. They are determined to help the school to achieve the ambitious vision in place for the whole school community. Parents value staff and the sense of a close community highly. Many praise the dedicated staff team. One parent captured the thoughts of many, saying, 'Staff know my children well and are always friendly and caring.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum does not outline the precise knowledge and vocabulary that the school wants pupils to learn. This leads to pupils having gaps in their knowledge. The school should ensure that clear cumulative knowledge is in place for all curriculum subjects with agreed approaches of how to teach and support all pupils to learn well.
- While some areas of the school's curriculum, such as phonics and mathematics, are being implemented effectively, pupils' outcomes are not high enough, particularly in writing. The school must continue to develop consistently effective pedagogical approaches, ensuring that all staff develop the specific subject expertise that they need to help pupils achieve well.
- Assessment information in the wider curriculum does not identify what pupils know securely enough. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge which are not identified by staff. The school needs to ensure that teachers check what pupils know and can do in consistent, efficient and effective ways.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	109818
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10287820
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Chandra Kunder
Headteacher	Kirsty Grierson
Website	www.alwyn.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Alwyn and Courthouse Federation and is federated with Courthouse Junior School.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, staff, pupils and representatives of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and geography. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff questionnaire, as well as the views of pupils that were gathered throughout the inspection and through the pupil questionnaire.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Carl McCarthy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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