

Inspection of a good school: Alton Infant School

Normandy Street, Alton, Hampshire GU34 1DH

Inspection dates:

20 June 2024

Outcome

Alton Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly and inclusive school where they are happy and safe. They know staff are always on hand if they need support or have a worry. The school is filled with warm relationships. Parents agree, with one summing up the views of others, describing it as 'a wonderfully nurturing school who have made a difference'.

Leaders' expectations for pupils are high. Pupils listen carefully to their adults. They are polite and helpful. During lessons, pupils work hard and are keen to learn. They enjoy the many activities they access during breaks, sharing equipment and playing together nicely. As a result, pupils enjoy their time at school and achieve well.

Pupils benefit from the carefully planned enrichment experiences across the curriculum. They enjoy attending clubs such as tennis, 'Little Voices' singing and football. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the trips and experiences such as visits to Wisley Gardens or Marwell Zoo. They thrill at experiences such as watching eggs hatch. Pupils learn about big ideas such as climate change. They are keen to help by recycling or by emptying compost food waste into the school's garden.

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

Children get off to a great start in the early years. The planned environment supports children's learning well. They benefit from a vocabulary-rich setting that develops their early language and communication skills successfully. Children access activities that support their early literacy and numeracy development well. The focus on important personal and social skills helps them to learn and play co-operatively with their friends. As a result, children are well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum.

Much thought has gone into the school's broad and ambitious curriculum. The school is highly inclusive. Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well to access the curriculum. In almost all subjects, leaders have identified an impressive body of knowledge for pupils to learn. In these subjects, particularly

mathematics, pupils achieve highly. However, leaders acknowledge that, for a small number of subjects beyond English and mathematics, there is more work to do.

Where the curriculum is well established, assessment systems, such as the school's 'Pen Portraits', work well. Teachers use the information they collect to plan activities that challenge and build on pupils' growing understanding. During lessons, adults present information carefully and model what the outcome of a task should look like, so that pupils are clear on what they need to do. However, in some subjects, the key knowledge pupils are to learn is not always explicitly identified and taught. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their learning and understanding.

Early reading is prioritised across the curriculum. Leaders ensure pupils read regularly at home and at school. Adults deliver the school's phonics programme expertly. This begins in early years where children learn to read their first words using their growing knowledge of the sounds letters make. Pupils read books that are matched carefully with the sounds they know and so quickly become fluent readers. They relish the daily story time filled with the high-quality literature promoted throughout the curriculum.

Pupils access a comprehensive personal development programme. They learn how to be a good friend and identify potential risky situations. Adults help pupils to identify and understand their emotions. In the early years, children learn about the 'Colour Monster' to help them identify their feelings and communicate these appropriately. Across the school, learning characters such as 'Resilience Tortoise' and 'Brave Spider' are designed to support pupils with their emotional development and resilience. The curriculum teaches pupils about different faiths and values and to be reflective about their own beliefs. As a result, pupils are highly accepting of others and astonished to think others may be treated differently because of their context.

Typically, pupils, including in the early years, behave well. Staff provide effective help to pupils that find managing their emotions more difficult. Where needed, staff arrange further professional support for these pupils and their families. However, leaders' expectations for all pupils' behaviour are not always consistently applied by adults. As a result, some low-level behaviours are not always addressed quickly enough.

The school is well led and managed. Governors work well with leaders, sharing their high expectations for the school. They hold leaders to account well. Staff appreciate leaders' consideration to their workload and wellbeing. They are proud to work at this school.

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 beyond English and mathematics, the school has not made the precise knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn explicitly clear. As a result,

some pupils do not learn as deeply as they could because some important pieces of knowledge are not taught. The school should ensure that the curriculum for all subjects builds cumulative knowledge, supporting all pupils to know and remember more securely.

- Leaders' high expectations for pupils' behaviour are not applied consistently by adults in the school. As a result, pupils can become distracted and not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that high expectations for behaviour are known and understood by all and applied consistently throughout the school.

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 the school to be good in January 2019.

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	115850
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10341350
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	151
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of governing body	Will Pointer Roisin Pope
Headteacher	Richard Mead
Website	www.alton-inf.hants.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school manages its own before school provision.
- The school does not make use of 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They also met with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history.

- For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised a wide range of information, including a selection of the school's records. Inspectors spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding and looked at how pupils learn to keep themselves safe. Inspectors spoke to the safeguarding leader about the recording and reporting of safeguarding incidents.
- Inspectors met some parents to gain their views of the school. They reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also took account of staff and pupils' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Laura James, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Carl McCarthy

His Majesty's Inspector

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