

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Alton School

Danebury Avenue, Roehampton, London SW15 4PD

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 January 2025

Outcome

The Alton School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Linsay Thomson. This school is part of Quality First Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, John Grove, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Brian Ledbetter.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school, which provides a happy and inclusive place that fosters their development and well-being. Staff know pupils very well. Pupils know that trusted adults will help them if they have any concerns. They are kept safe at school.

The school aims for pupils to become 'excellent learners and to fulfil their potential'. Pupils rise to meet these high expectations and achieve well across the curriculum. They engage and participate in lessons keenly.

Pupils are expected to be 'ready, respectful, and safe' at all times. They receive clear instructions on how to behave, both in and out of lessons. Pupils follow adult instructions promptly. They are confident, considerate of their peers, and polite.

The school celebrates its diversity. Pupils respect each other's backgrounds, faiths, and beliefs. Pupils and staff come together to celebrate through cultural days and community events. In assemblies and lessons, pupils learn about identity, difference, and respect for others. These activities help to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

Pupils engage in a wide variety of activities which help them to understand their community. For example, they take part in local regeneration projects, support the work of local artists and join in with Christmas lantern parades. They also work closely with a local independent school, where they learn life-skills like swimming and cooking.

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

Pupils join this school from a range of starting points. The school uses a variety of checks to understand pupils' needs. It is quick to identify any pupils requiring additional support, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Consequently, pupils make a strong start to their education.

The school has put in place a curriculum that is well designed and arranged carefully. It prioritises supporting children to learn how to read effectively. As soon as children start in Nursery, they are well supported in their journey to becoming readers. For example, they learn to tune in to sounds that they hear around them. This means that when they move to the Reception Year, they are ready to learn phonics straight away. Pupils practise their phonics by reading books which match the sounds they already know with precision. Those who are falling behind receive effective support and catch up quickly. At the same time as learning phonics, children are taught to form letters and develop their writing well. By the end of Year 2, pupils read and write with increasing fluency, accuracy and confidence.

The curriculum builds consistently on what pupils already know and can do. The school has considered the knowledge that is required for pupils to make sense of new learning. In mathematics, for example, what children learn about number in the Reception class prepares them well for the subject content taught in Year 1, including building fluency with adding and subtracting numbers. Similarly, in geography, pupils in Year 5 learn about biomes and climates. Knowledge of these concepts helps them to understand the impact of climate change, which they study in Year 6.

The curriculum is taught effectively. Teaching consistently features appropriate approaches to develop pupils' knowledge. Effective adaptations support pupils with SEND to learn the curriculum well. Pupils' learning is also supported well by, for instance, illustrations and examples. Sometimes, however, pupils are set activities that take their focus away from learning important content. When this happens, pupils do not retain key knowledge, leading to gaps in their understanding.

Pupils attend school regularly. In instances where absence becomes an issue, the school does what it reasonably can to support pupils to improve their attendance.

Pupils are entrusted with positions of responsibility to develop their leadership skills. For example, members of the pupil leadership team are chosen democratically by their peers. These pupil-leaders run the weekly achievement assembly, and so learn leadership and interpersonal skills. House captains lead pupils diligently in collecting tokens for their house. These are given for exemplary behaviour or outstanding achievements. Younger pupils in the school appreciate the work of playground buddies who help them to resolve minor conflicts or misunderstandings.

The school has put in place well-considered processes for checking and improving school performance. This includes trust-led curriculum development and a structured programme

of professional development for staff. Trustees and governors hold leadership to account and provide challenge, including through school visits. They also help the school to deploy resources effectively, such as prioritising additional investment in reading to further improve outcomes. The work of those responsible for governance plays a key role in the school's ongoing success.

The school makes a considerable contribution to supporting staff with their workload. Leaders have streamlined processes enabling staff to focus on the delivery of the curriculum. Staff appreciate that they get to work collaboratively with colleagues from other schools within the trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, pupils are given activities that take their focus away from learning important content. When this happens, pupils do not retain key knowledge which leads to gaps in their understanding. The school should ensure that the teaching of the curriculum supports pupils effectively to know more of the subject content.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 predecessor school, The Alton School, to be good for overall effectiveness in December 2016.

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	145030
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10346058
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Brian Ledbetter
CEO of the trust	John Grove
Headteacher	Linsay Thomson
Website	www.thealton-q1e.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of the Quality First Education Trust.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. The provision has up to 20 places for pupils with autism. There are 20 pupils currently learning in the provision. Pupils who attend the provision have an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses one alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector held discussions with the chief executive officer, the Headteacher, and other members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspector also met with trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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.
- The inspector also considered the views of parents through their responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Edison David, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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