

Inspection of Alma Primary

Friern Barnet Lane, Whetstone, London N20 0LP

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive at school with a smile on their face. Staff welcome and greet them warmly. Pupils are kind and caring towards each other. They typically behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. Most pupils focus well during learning time and are motivated to achieve well.

Relationships between pupils and staff are positive and nurturing. Pupils know that if they have a concern, they can talk to staff who will listen and take action. This means they feel happy and safe.

Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to debate and consider the views of others. For example, older pupils debate philosophical issues, such as whether knowledge is always a good thing. These experiences help pupils to develop their own ideas and confidence when speaking in front of others.

Pupils take on positions of responsibility. This includes acting as school councillors, eco-warriors and members of the Chesed committee. The Chesed committee are pupils who promote kindness around the school.

Leaders provide a wide range of clubs, including karate, debate and Spanish. These activities help pupils to develop their talents and pursue their interests. Pupils are incredibly proud of the school's sporting achievements, such as winning the small schools Pokémon primary football tournament 2023.

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

Leaders want every pupil to learn to read fluently and without delay. Pupils visit the school library regularly, older pupils read to younger pupils and a mystery reader visits the school weekly to read to pupils. These experiences develop pupils' love for reading.

Pupils enjoy talking about the books they are reading. They are given books to practise reading that are matched to the sounds that they know. This helps to improve pupils' confidence and fluency. Staff regularly check the sounds that pupils know. Those pupils who find phonics difficult receive support to catch up and keep up with their classmates.

Leaders want all pupils to achieve well. In most subjects, the curriculum is well structured. Leaders have identified what they want pupils to learn, and this is broken down into logical sequential steps. For example, in Year 2 pupils investigate the effects of exercise on their heart rate because they have previously been taught about the importance of exercise. Children in Reception use language, such as 'structure, join' and 'magnetic' when using magnetic shapes to build. However, in a few subjects the curriculum is not sequenced as effectively as it could be. This is because leaders have not identified the key skills, understanding and vocabulary

that need to be taught and learned year on year. This means pupils have gaps in their knowledge and have developed misconceptions.

In most subjects, leaders make sure staff have the subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum effectively. Misconceptions are typically corrected within lessons and teachers model learning effectively. For example, in physical education teachers demonstrate how to effectively dribble and control a football.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength of the school. The needs of pupils with SEND are accurately and effectively identified. Pupils with SEND access learning alongside their peers because teachers adapt their approaches and resources effectively. Leaders work closely with external professionals, such as speech and occupational therapists. These experts provide support and guidance for teachers and leaders. Therefore, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils are proud of their school and typically show positive attitudes to their learning. This is because expectations and routines are clear. As a result, the curriculum is taught without any interruption.

Personal, social, health and economic education is well structured. Leaders want pupils to become responsible and respectful citizens and to play their part in developing a 'world built on kindness'. Pupils are taught how to manage their feelings, to collaborate and to look after others. For example, pupils in Year 6 visit a food bank to develop their understanding of gratitude. Pupils are taught about protected characteristics and the importance of individual liberty.

Lessons across the curriculum subjects help pupils understand how to identify risks, both within and beyond the school. Pupils are taught about healthy and unhealthy relationships and consent.

Governors are ambitious for the school. They understand what the school does well and what leaders need to do to make it even better. Governors have procedures in place to challenge and hold leaders to account. Staff value the care they receive from senior leaders to support their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is everyone's priority here. Staff are well trained and receive regular safeguarding updates. This means they understand and follow procedures for reporting any concerns. Leaders respond swiftly to concerns raised. They engage with outside safeguarding partners, so that families and pupils receive the support they need.

Leaders invite visiting speakers to talk to pupils about the importance of keeping safe within and beyond school. For example, first responders visited Reception to

teach children how to call for help and assistance. Pupils are also encouraged to keep safe online.

Safer recruitment procedures are followed and all the required pre-employment checks are carried out.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, learning is not sequenced as effectively as it could be. This means pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that they identify and sequence the key knowledge, vocabulary and skills they want pupils to know and remember year-on-year. This will enable pupils to learn and remember more, deepening subject-specific understanding.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	139562
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10240941
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Ilan Jacobs
Headteacher	Marc Shoffren
Website	www.almaprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	21 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a school with a Jewish character.
- The school received a section 48 inspection in June 2022.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 held meetings with the senior leadership team to discuss school development.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body. They also met with a school improvement partner from 'Herts for Learning'.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to safeguarding, pupils' personal development and behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and art and design. 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.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The views of parents and staff were also considered, including through Ofsted's online surveys.
- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records and through discussions with pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Deborah Walters, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tom Canning

Ofsted Inspector

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