

Fox Primary School comes top for a second year running

The London-based primary school came top in today's league tables; the associate head teacher puts this down to a rich and exciting curriculum – and a bit of jazz

By Josie Gurney Read

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Associate headteacher Emma Madden with children at Fox Primary School in Kensington | CREDIT: Photo: Clara Molden/The Telegraph

From [books and beekeeping last year](#), to jazz and debating this year; maintaining a rich and exciting curriculum is one factor contributing to Fox Primary School's continued success, according to associate head teacher, Emma Madden.

This morning, the Kensington-based [primary school](#) was name top in the country – for the second year running – according to Key Stage 2 SATs exams taken this summer.

Despite falling 2 per cent on the number of pupils achieving Level 4 – the average expected of the age group – the number of pupils achieving Level 5 actually increased, from 73 to 86 per cent, putting Fox Primary ahead of all other schools in the country.

Last year, Paul Cotter, the current head teacher of the school, said that maintaining a varied curriculum that embraced the arts and music was high on the school's agenda. And it seems that this goal has helped the school hold on to its position at the top of the [league tables](#).

This September, the school has introduced debating for the first time, with pupils encouraged to read up on current affairs and take part in competitions with neighbouring Ashburnham Primary School, which, according to Ms Madden, has had a big impact on the students' self-confidence and ability to articulate points of view.

Yet it is more than simply debating and jazz lessons that have had an impact on students.

In fact, Ms Madden, insists that the school's success is down to a "holistic approach to education".

"The results are important to us, but more important is that children experience a rich and exciting curriculum, with opportunities in the arts, physical education, jazz, music, cookery, drama, debate, gardening," she says. "These are integral.

"We believe that the success of our Year 6 stands on the shoulders of the quality of the teaching and curriculum in every year of the school. From the early years we have a child centred approach to learning."



Children in a music lesson at Fox Primary School in Kensington, west London (Clara Molden)

Speaking about the Government’s targets for primary schools, which this year increased from 60 per cent to 65 per cent of pupils achieving Level 4, Ms Madden says that schools need more investment rather than increasing requirements.

“I don’t believe that targets improve standards – what improves standards is investing in teachers, investing in schools, investing in professional development.

“In my experience, teachers work extraordinarily hard. Saying that higher targets will improve standards suggests that people aren’t working as hard as they can already.

“Schools have limited budgets, and while many would love to invest more time in

Even though Fox Primary is situated in one of Britain’s most expensive boroughs, figures show almost a fifth of pupils sitting exams this year were from poor families and 40 per cent spoke English as a second language.

Echoing Mr Cotter, Ms Madden says that all the staff play a part in making the school a success.

“Beyond simply the teachers, it’s our chef, it’s our bursar, it’s our incredible governing body and the parents and carers. The whole school works together to achieve the school’s aims.

“However, we are not satisfied with being an individual successful school, we are really committed to sharing good practice as widely as possible.”



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