

# Squirrels Heath Junior School

Salisbury Road, Romford, Essex, RM2 5TP

**Inspection dates** 15–16 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress. By the end of Year 6 they do not, therefore, always reach levels of attainment that they are capable of, especially in reading and writing.
- Teaching is inconsistent. As a result not all pupils make good progress.
- Teachers do not always provide work that is challenging enough.
- Pupils do not always have enough time to act on their teachers' advice in marking to improve their understanding and make rapid progress.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough in some lessons. Pupils' work can be well presented sometimes, but there are occasions when poor presentation and scruffy handwriting are accepted.
- Behaviour is not always managed effectively in some classrooms.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors, have started to bring about change. However, these improvements are at an early stage and have not had time to make their full impact.

### The school has the following strengths

- Attendance has improved.
- Display around the school is bright, colourful and attractive.
- Governors have recently started to challenge the school more robustly.
- Pupils' achievement has started to improve.
- Progress in mathematics is improving and is good.
- Pupils get on well together at break times and support each other well.
- Leaders at all levels have evaluated the school's current strengths and areas for development accurately.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 19 lessons, five of which were jointly observed with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspectors scrutinised the 18 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspection questionnaires completed by 28 staff were analysed.
- Meetings took place with staff, pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised pupils' books, records of pupils' progress, the school's checks on teaching and learning and its development plan, records of behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding documents.
- The whole school had a sports day on the afternoon of the 15 July 2014.
- Year 6 pupils were on a trip for part of the morning and the afternoon of the 16 July 2014.

## Inspection team

Emma Merva, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Harper-Sutherland	Additional Inspector
David Gutmann	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Squirrels Heath Primary is an above-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The largest groups of pupils are from White British and Other White heritages.
- An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. The proportion supported through school action is above average.
- The headteacher has recently returned from long-term absence. He is retiring at the end of this summer term. The deputy headteacher has been acting as headteacher.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school to become consistently good or better so that all pupils make the best possible progress by:
  - making sure that work in lessons accurately reflects pupils' abilities, effectively challenges pupils and engages them fully in learning
  - ensuring that all staff have high expectations of pupils' achievement, including the presentation of their work
  - continuing to identify and use the best practice to support improvements in teaching
  - making sure that teachers manage pupils' behaviour consistently well
  - ensuring pupils have time to act on advice given by teachers through marking.
- Improve the school's leadership and management by:
  - continuing to develop the roles of leaders at all levels so that they are able to improve pupils' achievement and the quality of the teaching.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The attainment of pupils has been broadly in line with the national average over time in reading and writing. In mathematics, attainment is above average.
- The school's own data indicate that there are still variations in achievement between classes and subjects.
- From their starting points, pupils, including the more able, make progress that requires improvement in reading and writing. In mathematics their progress is good.
- The rates of progress are beginning to improve and examples of rapid progress are appearing. For example, the school's own 2014 data show that, for the first time, 11 pupils gained the very high Level 6 in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 and two pupils gained a Level 6 in spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, attainment is still inconsistent across the school.
- The school's 2014 data indicate that attainment in reading by the end of Year 6 meets national expectations. The evidence in pupils' books and the school's own data appear to show that in reading there is an improving picture across the school, although it is still inconsistent.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) has been successful and pupils use these skills well when reading unfamiliar words and working out their meanings.
- Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs make progress similar to that of their classmates. This is because well-trained teaching assistants provide skilful support. The pupils for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to that of other pupils. The achievement of pupils of minority ethnic backgrounds is similar to that of other pupils.
- Those in receipt of additional funding make the same progress as their classmates because of the support they are receiving from a teacher with particular responsibility for their achievement. In 2014, Year 6 pupils eligible for free school meals attained standards which are two terms behind their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this gap is narrowing over time.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement. It is not yet consistently good and does not ensure that all pupils are challenged to make rapid progress. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are inconsistent across the school. Standards of handwriting and presentation of work are uneven and untidy work is sometimes accepted by teachers.
- Sometimes teachers do not make full use of the information they have about pupils to ensure that work is pitched at the right level. More challenging work is not always provided when they are ready. This variability means that some pupils are not challenged fully by their work.
- The teaching of reading is improving. However, it is still too uneven and pupils do not all benefit from reading sessions with adults. A few of these sessions are ineffective, so that pupils do not make rapid enough progress or use their reading records consistently to improve their skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported in lessons so that they make similar progress to other pupils.
- Marking is thorough and regular. However, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to make corrections following the marking of their work in order to avoid later repetition of errors.
- When pupils enjoy lessons and have work that is suitable for their needs they make consistently good progress. This is because the teacher has checked pupils' understanding and provided appropriate activities.
- Likewise, when pupils feel challenged and work is engaging, they progress well and are passionate about their learning. This was seen in a writing lesson in which pupils were learning how to use adjectives differently. The teacher questioned and challenged different groups to use different adjectives. The pupils were highly engaged and actively involved with this enthusiastic learning session.

- Systems are in place for managing behaviour, but they are inconsistently applied by some teachers. As a result, there are times when a minority of pupils lose concentration in lessons.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View believe that behaviour is good. However, a significant number feels that the school does not always ensure that the pupils are well behaved. Pupils themselves feel behaviour is good; but, in fact, there are times when they lose focus in lessons and become restless.
- Pupils have increasingly positive attitudes to learning, but they are inconsistent across the school. They depend on whether the approaches used in lessons and the topics engage them.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors. They work cooperatively together and take on responsibility. For example, in a class assembly, pupils read aloud and helped each other to do their best. Pupils get on well together during break times.
- Pupils feel safe in school. A very large majority of the few parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, agree their children are safe in school.
- The school's work to keep the pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying such as cyber bullying and name calling. They say that there is always an adult to go to if a problem occurs. However, a minority of those spoken to by inspectors said that action does not always follow promptly.
- Attendance is improving and is now broadly in line with the national average.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are clear about how to judge the effectiveness of the school. They are well supported by staff and the governing body. More recently, challenge and support have been well directed to bring about improvements. As a result, achievement in mathematics has improved and attendance is rising.
- The school has systems for checking pupils' progress, but they have not been used well enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good or better progress.
- The school has dealt with the areas for development identified at its last inspection. Senior staff have been working hard with middle leaders on improving teaching and achievement. Support and development to improve the quality of teaching are under way. Teachers have started to observe each other in lessons to help share good practice. However, although this is leading to improvements, for example in the teaching of mathematics, this work is still at an early stage. It has not yet had enough impact on the pupils' achievement.
- Arrangements to check the performance of teachers are in place. There are links between targets for teachers and teachers' pay.
- Additional funding has been used to support effectively those pupils who are eligible for it so that they make similar progress to that of their peers.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and offers interesting opportunities, for example to study history projects about the First World War. Trips and visits related to topics pupils are learning about increase their understanding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well through taking part in assemblies. The bright and vivid displays, both around school and in the classrooms, bring subjects alive. For example, in some classrooms displays about Africa and its traditions offer pupils an insight into other cultures. Leaders ensure that each child is treated individually, that there is equality of opportunity for all pupils and that there is no discrimination of any kind.
- The primary sport funding has been used effectively to develop an understanding of living a healthy lifestyle, increasing participation in sport such as gymnastics, netball and football clubs, and training for staff.

- Links between the school and parents are a high priority and the school has been working on different ways to increase them.
- The school receives support from the local authority in subjects including English, mathematics and science. Frequent meetings also take place with a core group of local authority officers, governors and senior leaders. This work has started to hold the school to account effectively and to help provide more support to meet its needs.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is very supportive of the school. The new Chair of the Governing Body is a regular visitor to the school and ensures governors who are attached to different subjects and areas also make routine visits. Governors are clear and realistic about the current performance of pupils and how it compares to national standards. They ensure statutory safeguarding requirements are in place. They have attended training, for example on school performance statistics and to provide guidance for new governors. Governors understand the current quality of teaching and that pay awards should link to pupils' progress. They understand how any underperformance is to be tackled. Until recently the governors have not held the school to account well enough for pupils' progress. However, their approach has recently become more rigorous. Governors are currently reorganising the governing body and would benefit from a review of governance as a group to help in taking the school forward.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	102303
<b>Local authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	442146

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	370
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Warner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ken Burgess
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10–11 January 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 446 472
<b>Fax number</b>	01708 479 472
<b>Email address</b>	Office@shj.havering.sch.uk

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