

# Northlands Junior School

Winifred Road, Pitsea, Basildon, SS13 3JQ

**Inspection dates** 28–29 January 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although improving, pupils' progress has not been rapid enough in the past, and standards in mathematics, reading and writing have been below average.
- Recent improvements in teaching have not been in place long enough to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Pupils do not always learn to read quickly enough because they are not given sufficient opportunities to practise their reading skills.
- More able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged because assessment information is not always used effectively to plan lessons.
- Teachers' marking and feedback in some year groups do not provide enough guidance about what pupils need to do next to be successful.
- Subject leaders have not kept a close enough eye on the progress pupils make and the impact of teaching in their subject areas.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has made a good start to improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Her passion and dedication have motivated staff.
- Leaders have used additional funding effectively to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils and to provide better opportunities for pupils' physical development.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is improving well because teaching in this subject has improved.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs learn effectively and make good progress.
- The school is a happy and pleasant place for pupils. Pupils enjoy learning, and their behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- A strong focus on safeguarding means all staff care for pupils skilfully and pupils feel safe.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is now above the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes and visited 15 lessons, of which 12 were seen jointly with members of the school’s leadership team.
- Meetings were held with two members of the governing body, the headteacher, subject and other leaders. Inspectors also spoke with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors held a meeting with a group of pupils. They talked informally with pupils at breaks and lunchtimes. They listened to pupils read.
- There were insufficient responses from parents to the online survey, Parent View, but inspectors spoke with parents and carers at the start of the school day and took account of their comments. Inspectors also noted the 19 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at several documents including the school’s evaluation of its own performance; plans for improvement; policies; and records of pupils’ behaviour and attendance. Safeguarding information and documents were reviewed.

## Inspection team

David Cousins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sally Wilkinson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized junior school.
- Over half of the pupils are disadvantaged and eligible for the pupil premium. This is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who, in this school, are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Around one in ten pupils are disabled or have special educational needs. This is below the national average.
- Most of the school's pupils come from a White British background. Less than one in five of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and one in 20 pupils in the school speak English as an additional language. This is below the national average.
- The current headteacher is newly appointed and has been in post from September 2014.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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

- Improve teaching in order to raise attainment and ensure that pupils in every class make at least good progress by ensuring:
  - teachers use available information to plan lessons that engage and challenge pupils, especially the more able, to develop deeper knowledge and understanding
  - pupils have extended opportunities to practise and develop their reading skills
  - feedback and marking consistently provide pupils with sufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve leadership and management by developing the skills of subject leaders and ensuring they play a greater part in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in their subject areas.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Subject leaders are not sufficiently knowledgeable about how well all groups of pupils are making progress and how to ensure that pupils attain well in their subjects. Until recently, they have not been completely secure in their evaluations of the way in which effective teaching results in good or better progress.
- Weaknesses in the management of assessments and teaching in the past contributed to weak attainment and progress. However, the new headteacher has galvanised both the governing body and the staff to seek ways to improve the outcomes for pupils and to create a school of which the community can be proud. She has brought great energy and skill to this task and is transforming the school.
- The teaching is improving, but is not yet consistently good across the school. Senior leaders, although not subject leaders, now check the quality of teaching regularly and provide helpful suggestions for improvement. New teachers, including those new to the profession, receive useful guidance and help from experienced colleagues. Targets to improve teachers' skills are linked suitably to improving pupils' progress and to the priorities in the school's improvement plan.
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Information and communication technology is used effectively in the teaching of many subjects. The linking of subjects into themes, such as 'Anglo Saxons' or 'crime and punishment', engages pupils' interest. Classwork is supported well by visits and a range of clubs. The school ensures all pupils have equal opportunities to access these activities and tackles all forms of discrimination well. Leaders and staff are starting to implement the new assessment arrangements.
- Pupils' understanding of life in modern British society is developed appropriately by the school. Pupils vote for their school councillors and understand the importance of answering to their classmates for their actions. Pupils learn about rules and the importance of the law, and they understand how to value the different views of others when they question one another's opinions in class discussions.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding is good. Some effective practice, such as supporting small groups and the care shown in tracking the most disadvantaged pupils, is helping to improve the progress they make. As a result, in Year 6 this year disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than the other pupils in the year group.
- Effective action and raised expectations from leaders have helped the school to ensure pupils attend much more regularly so they can take advantage of the improvements in learning. Attendance is now above the national average. Fewer pupils now arrive late, and a breakfast club helps parents to get their children to school on time.
- Safeguarding routines are well established, and staff are vigilant with regard to pupils' safety. Policies and procedures ensure that all statutory requirements are met.
- The primary school physical education and sports premium is used well to promote pupils' physical development and to extend their sporting opportunities. The school uses a specialist teacher, and all teachers have been helped to develop their expertise in areas such as gymnastics. More pupils than before attend sports clubs and activities.
- The school has had intensive support from the Basildon Excellence Panel on behalf of the local authority which has helped to secure improvements in leadership and the monitoring skills of senior leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governors are supportive and recognise how important a successful school is for the local community.
  - Governance has improved since the previous inspection. Governors are now asking more searching

questions and are using data effectively in order to hold the school's leaders to account for pupils' progress. The headteacher provides useful data so that they can watch carefully over the progress of specific groups within the school and compare it with national averages.

- Governors are familiar with requirements for the management of teachers' performance. They know how good teachers are rewarded and how those who are less successful are supported.
- Governors have overseen the use of pupil premium and sports funding effectively.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All staff, parents and carers who spoke to inspectors agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous, are happy to welcome visitors to their school and talk about how they get on together. Conduct is good in lessons and across the school.
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning. Most are fully engaged in their work and show good levels of concentration. They are proud of their school and show this by not dropping litter and by keeping their classrooms neat and tidy.
- Attendance and punctuality have improved because of the actions taken by the school and the governing body. Attendance levels are now above average and fewer pupils than before now arrive late.
- Very occasionally, there are incidents of inappropriate behaviour; however, leaders and staff keep a close eye on such occurrences and manage pupils' behaviour well.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Safeguarding and other policies ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Pupils say they feel safe at school and typically respond 'No' when asked if there are times that they feel worried or afraid in school.
- Pupils told the inspectors that bullying is very rare in the school and said this is because their teachers look after them well. They were certain that any bullying would be quickly dealt with by staff and all could turn to a trusted adult if they needed help.
- Discussions with pupils reveal that they have a clear understanding of bullying and its different forms, including cyber-bullying and name calling.
- Staff are suitably trained in child protection matters to recognise and act on any signs of abuse or neglect.

## **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not ensured good progress for all groups of pupils, and weaknesses in teaching have slowed pupils' progress and resulted in below average attainment. Although improving rapidly, the teaching is still not regularly good enough across the school in reading, to bring standards up to those seen in writing and mathematics. The expectations of some teachers of what pupils can achieve and how much work they could produce to develop and strengthen basic skills are not high enough.
- The quality of marking has improved. For example, pupils like the use of highlighters by teachers to indicate what they have done well and what they need to improve. However, teachers do not always provide enough guidance on how pupils might improve their work. This means that pupils are not always clear about how to move on to higher levels.
- The assessment of pupils' attainment has recently been reviewed and strengthened, and so teachers have

a more accurate view of how well pupils are doing. However, assessment information is still not always used effectively enough to plan tasks at the right level of difficulty for pupils, particularly for the most able. When this happens, these pupils do not make the progress they could because the work is either too easy or too difficult.

- A recent move to improve writing, by talking about the ideas and skills needed to make it better, is beginning to have a positive impact. Pupils are now given better opportunities to write for different purposes, and in a range of styles. Despite new resources, there are not enough opportunities in lessons or out of lessons for pupils to practise their reading skills.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved. Number and calculation skills and the main ways of using these skills are taught well. Pupils are now being given opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills to solve problems.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a sound contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who need additional help with language and literacy.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, is not yet good. The progress pupils made in 2014 improved strongly, but was still below the progress pupils made nationally. As a result, standards remained below average in mathematics, reading and writing.
- The changes the new headteacher has made have quickly begun to improve the effectiveness of teaching in the school, and this has improved the amount of progress pupils are making, especially in mathematics. The information held by the school for the pupils in Year 6 indicates they are on track to make much better progress this year and leave with expected levels.
- School information shows that the most able pupils and those who speak English as an additional language are beginning to make better progress because of the focus on improved teaching, particularly in Year 6. However, sometimes, work is not sufficiently demanding. In 2014, the proportions of pupils in Year 6 attaining the higher levels were below average in mathematics and reading. Currently, more pupils in Year 6 are working at higher levels in key areas of learning.
- The school is working effectively to ensure any gaps in the skills and understanding of disadvantaged pupils, compared with other pupils, are closing. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils lagged behind other pupils in school by two terms in reading, almost three term in mathematics and two terms in writing. When compared with other pupils nationally they were about four terms behind in reading and mathematics, and three terms behind in writing. The school's own information indicates that, so far this year, disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than other pupils in the school.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving quickly. Well-focused support which meets their needs and effective guidance from the leader for this area are having a positive impact and are helping these pupils to learn effectively and to make good progress. Their progress is more rapid than that of other pupils.

## 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>	115243
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	453682

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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	244
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Randle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Young
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 January 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 553366
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