

Moulsham Junior School

Princes Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 9DG

Inspection dates

19–20 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress over time has not been good enough, especially in mathematics. The quality of teaching and how much progress pupils make is variable across the school.
- Teachers' expectations of what groups of pupils can achieve vary too much. Some do not check the learning in lessons well enough or adapt tasks to ensure that pupils are progressing quickly.
- Pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve their work. At times, they do not have sufficient opportunity to redraft their writing to show improvement.
- Governors do not routinely check that statutory policies reference the most current guidance.
- Pupils' presentation of work varies across the school and is not good. This is because teachers do not routinely insist on the school's policy for a high standard of presentation.
- Teachers do not consistently use what they know about the prior achievement of pupils to plan learning that systematically challenges and stretches all pupils to excel.
- Teachers do not expect all their pupils to apply mathematical knowledge in a range of different ways. As a result, some pupils do not deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills to make accelerated progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders set high expectations. Teaching is improving because leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement. There is a strong plan for training and support so that staff improve.
- Pupils want to learn and do well. They feel safe and secure. Their behaviour in class and around the school is mostly good and improving.
- Pupils in Year 3 are making strong progress. This is because teachers share their good practice and pupils receive consistently good provision.
- Attendance is consistently above average.
- Pupils receive a broad curriculum so they can be well prepared for the many subjects at secondary school.
- Pupils' attainment at Year 6 is above that expected nationally and has been for many years.
- Pupils benefit from well-planned provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Important British values are emphasised well.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support individuals and groups

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so pupils make better progress by:
 - using assessment information precisely to plan learning that meets the needs of pupils at different ability levels
 - ensuring that teachers give more opportunities for pupils to deepen and apply their knowledge and skills in a variety of ways so that they make good or better progress over time
 - ensuring that teachers expect more of pupils in lessons and provide opportunities for pupils of all abilities to grapple and explore in mathematics
 - modelling and insisting on the highest presentation and pride in work
 - increasing the subject knowledge and understanding of all adults so that the quality of mathematics teaching is more precise
 - giving pupils regular opportunity to edit and redraft their writing.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - governors ensuring that policies are rigorously evaluated and fully in line with current statutory guidance and documents.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since the previous inspection, the leadership of the school has changed. The current headteacher's pursuit of excellence is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and capable senior leaders. Their team work is strong with capacity to bring about the necessary improvements in teaching to accelerate pupils' progress. The headteacher brings a renewed energy and relentless focus to improve the progress of all pupils, which has been below average for a number of years. As a result, current leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance and a clear understanding of what needs to be achieved to be a good school.
- Following a period of restructure and some staff turbulence, the performance management of teaching and support staff is now well managed. Adults have access to high-quality training to help them improve their skills. Nearly all the staff who completed the staff questionnaire understand what the leadership team wants to achieve, enjoy and are proud to work at Moulsham Junior School. Over three quarters of respondents say that the school is a better place than previously. There is a cohesive approach to improvement and good staff morale is evident.
- The heads of year are effective. They ensure that teachers plan learning effectively across the five classes in a year group. Consequently pupils receive equal opportunity to experience a broad and balanced curriculum. In Year 3, the head of year provides targeted help to teachers to improve their practice. The impact of the professional development can be seen in the work in pupils' books, which is of a consistently strong quality in all classes.
- The work of the new inclusion leader and pastoral support worker is strong. Systems are firmly in place to ensure that pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those who have special educational needs or disability, are given the support they require. Learning support assistants receive additional training which is proving effective for those pupils who find learning a challenge. From leaders' analysis of the impact of this work, more pupils, who receive additional support, are making better progress than previously.
- The school uses the additional government funding increasingly well to support the learning of the small proportion of disadvantaged pupils. It is used to provide extra support and improve well-being for vulnerable pupils as well as developing positive links with parents. Some of these parents commended the pastoral work of the school and the support that they receive. As a result, disadvantaged pupils currently on roll achieve broadly in line with other pupils nationally and in some cases even better, and are increasing in confidence and self-esteem.
- Leaders plan well for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Important British values are entwined in the themes in assemblies. For example, pupils have been learning about tolerance and how to care for each other. They are able to write their reflections on a board outside the headteacher's room. From the many comments, one pupil had written 'tolerance is when someone respects others' opinions and beliefs'.
- Middle leaders of English and mathematics are becoming more effective. For example, the English leader has reorganised the books that pupils study throughout the school, ensuring that they are more challenging and exciting for the different age ranges. As a result, pupils are enjoying their reading and look forward to the range of books they study. The provision of a new library is having a positive impact. Older pupils have responsibilities for keeping the library in good order, and more pupils talk about the pleasure of reading and choosing books to help research facts.
- Although the school is an academy, the new leaders have commissioned the support of the local authority. It has supported leaders in making recent improvements and evaluating the impact of actions taken. The headteacher maintains a sharp focus on the school's priorities of improving the progress of all groups of pupils.
- School leaders use the sports premium funding well to enhance the achievement of pupils. Pupils benefit from additional coaching and increased participation in competitions. Staff receive additional training to ensure that teaching is of a high quality in physical education. The pupils particularly enjoy the lunchtime games on the school field.
- Leaders seek and take account of the views of parents and carers, staff and pupils. Work is ongoing to improve communication with parents, and in particular to win the confidence of the minority that the school is aware of, who feel that leaders and managers could do more to meet their children's needs.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors ensure that their duties in terms of meetings, finance and performance management are fully met. They support the work of the headteacher and are having an increased impact in holding school leaders to account for the progress of pupils.
 - Governors have not been as challenging of school leaders as they should have been. This is because they have not used the assessment information accurately enough to challenge school leaders regarding the progress that all pupils make. They are now receiving more detailed information and understand the areas that require improvement and check the quality of the school's work during their regular 'impact days'.
 - Governors are not checking policies precisely enough when renewing them. Consequently some policies refer to older statutory documents are not as up to date as they should be.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and all the relevant checks are made on staff and volunteers who work with pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils learn how to learn and play safely. For example, in an assembly taken by an external visitor, pupils were being taught how to be safe around dogs in the community. All adults are trained in identifying and recording more serious concerns. Leaders with responsibilities for safeguarding vulnerable pupils are relentless when dealing with other agencies so that pupils and parents receive the help and support they need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching has not been consistent enough over time to ensure that all pupils make good progress. This is because adults' expectations of what all pupils can achieve have not been high enough. However, the quality of teaching is improving after a period of considerable change. Evidence seen in pupils' books demonstrates that in some year groups pupils are making consistently good progress, for example in Year 3.
- In some classes, pupils are challenged effectively by the tasks and questions teachers set. However, this is not done consistently well across the school. Teachers do not ensure that activities help all pupils think and apply their skills well enough in a range of ways. As a result, some pupils, particularly the middle-ability pupils, do not make as much progress as they could.
- Teachers make sure that the most-able pupils excel by providing them with extra challenges. For example, in the mathematics ability groups the most-able pupils enjoy the additional work they receive, eagerly discussing mathematical concepts and problems. Too often, though, the other pupils repeat work that does not give them opportunity to show their capabilities. Pupils are not routinely experiencing mathematical activities that require them to grapple and explore their knowledge of concepts well enough, irrespective of ability.
- Teachers do not check the progress that pupils are making in a lesson consistently well. Leaders have introduced systems for checking pupils' progress in lessons. Where teachers apply the school policy and chosen methods, pupils are able to access help and support quickly. In some classes, teachers do not use the strategies well enough and pupils who have shown they are unsure do not receive the help they need. Consequently, this slows the rates of progress for some pupils.
- Some adults do not insist on the highest standard of presentation in books. For example, too many pupils do not achieve the accuracy required in mathematical drawing because these skills are not precisely modelled by the teachers. Where adults model and insist on the highest presentation, pupils respond well and demonstrate a pride in their learning.
- Where teachers have good knowledge of their subjects, pupils make better progress. Most teachers have strong subject knowledge in English and more pupils are making better progress in writing as a result. Pupils have opportunity to write in other subjects as well as English, so they practise their skills in a range of interesting ways. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to edit and redraft their writing so that they develop their writing skills further.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is improving. Learning support assistants who work with particular individuals or groups use a range of effective strategies and questions to build pupils' confidence and skills. In some small-group sessions seen, adults ensure that pupils use a range of well-chosen resources to develop their independence and skills. In class, however, teachers do not always consider their needs so carefully. Consequently, these pupils do not have opportunity to make the most of the additional learning they have previously received to make faster progress.

- In general, pupils enjoy and complete the homework they receive to consolidate their learning from school. However, pupils commented that not all teachers rigorously follow the guidelines set by school leaders. The inconsistency causes pupils and parents to be less confident that the school is establishing good learning habits and was commented upon in the questionnaire.
- Standards of reading are high. The English leader ensures that pupils have experience of more challenging texts in lessons. For example, in Year 5, pupils are studying one of Shakespeare's plays, 'Macbeth'. Adults have carefully considered how best to help pupils understand the challenges of the vocabulary used. In English lessons seen, teachers effectively used the pupils as actors to help them understand and become involved in the story. The pupils were particularly enthused by the play and eagerly anticipated the next lesson.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils want to learn and do well at Moulsham Junior School. They wear their uniform with pride. Pupils speak openly and articulately about working hard and learning well so that they have good futures. They are keen to achieve academically and place a high value on education.
- Pupils value the roles and responsibilities they are given. The peer monitor roles at breaktimes are highly sought after. Pupils have to apply for these positions and take their responsibilities seriously. They are trained so they have the necessary skills to help rebuild any friendship issues that may arise. Younger pupils are happy to speak with the peer monitors. Consequently, upsets are dealt with quickly and well.
- School leaders carefully choose visiting speakers to take assemblies to help pupils develop their understanding and strategies for keeping safe. Themes for assemblies are carefully planned, with a focus on developing pupils' well-being. In one assembly seen, a local visitor, from a dogs home, gently and carefully provided strategies for pupils so they understand how to be more confident around dogs in the community. During the assembly, pupils were attentive and respectful, participating well during this time.
- Pastoral support for families and vulnerable families is highly effective. Pupils are well cared for in this large junior school.
- Adults provide good support and advice to pupils as they prepare for secondary school. The proportion of pupils who attain the higher levels is significantly above that expected for their age. Most pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and respectful around the school, routinely holding doors open for adults and each other. Most speak openly to each other about positive values on how to behave with each other and in class.
- Pupils value their education and rarely miss a day. Consequently, attendance is high overall and has been sustained over a number of years.
- Pupils understand that bullying can take many different forms. They are confident that, should bullying occur in school, adults will deal with it. Pupils spoken to during the inspection know that at times some pupils find learning more of a challenge and show tolerance and acceptance of these pupils in lessons.
- Staff keep detailed records of poor behaviour, and leaders respond appropriately to the higher-level concerns. Although exclusions are higher than the national average, detailed school records show that leaders consider and use exclusions as a last resort. They follow procedures carefully and rigorously. The school provides a good level of support to pupils who have emotional and social difficulties, helping them learn strategies to manage their own behaviour.
- Where behaviour is less than good, it is when pupils are not challenged or supported well enough in lessons to meet their needs or the management of behaviour is inconsistent.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Most pupils start Year 3 with skills and abilities that are high and often above those expected for their age. Although attainment of pupils by the end of Year 6 remains high and has been maintained since the last inspection, not enough pupils make good progress. This is particularly true for the previously middle-

and lower-ability pupils. This is because pupils do not always receive the precise teaching and support they require to make even better progress. Consequently, over time pupils have not shown the same rates of progress as other pupils nationally with the same starting points.

- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils has been inconsistent over time. Last year, in Year 6, the gap between these pupils' achievement and others nationally widened in reading, writing and mathematics. Much work has been achieved by school leaders to monitor and improve the progress of pupils who are disadvantaged. Those who are currently on roll are now making strong progress and achieving in line with their peers.
- Historically, too many pupils, including those who have special educational needs or disability, have not made the progress of which they are capable as they have moved through the school. This is because teachers do not expect enough of these pupils or give them with sufficient opportunity to develop their skills and make accelerated progress. This is particularly the case in mathematics where pupils' progress is less consistent because teaching is not as strong.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils is good by the end of Year 6. They consistently achieve the higher levels and compare well with their national peers. In 2015, a larger percentage than nationally achieved the very highest level 6 in reading and mathematics. Work seen in pupils' books indicates that this high achievement of the most-able pupils is set to continue.
- In other subject areas pupils demonstrate their skills and abilities well. In lessons such as computing and art, pupils produce work that shows they challenge themselves. Often in these lessons, teachers expect more of pupils and provide interesting and stimulating learning opportunities. The results are of a high quality.

School details

Unique reference number	137971
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10006550

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	598
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sameh Hindi
Headteacher	Marie Staley
Telephone number	01245 352098
Website	www.moulsham-jun.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@moulsham-jun.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 September 2011

Information about this school

- This is a junior school that is much larger than the average-sized primary school. It converted to become an academy in August 2012. When the school was last inspected it was judged to be good.
- There have been a number of senior leadership changes since the previous inspection. A new headteacher took up post in September 2014. In 2015 the school undertook a significant staffing restructure. Some additional senior leadership positions have been introduced. The school has experienced significant building work, which completed in January 2016.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and in receipt of additional government funding through the pupil premium is lower than national.
- The number of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is average.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection converted from a short section 8 inspection into a full section 5 inspection.
- The inspectors gathered a wide range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching over time. This included observing learning in 30 lessons, some of which were seen jointly with senior leaders, together with a number of learning walks at different times of the school day.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils formally and informally, scrutinised books to take account of the work that has been done and the progress that pupils make over time. Nineteen pupils responded to the online pupil questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and members of the governing body. A telephone meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation regarding keeping children safe and scrutinised the single central register. The arrangements for pupils who have special educational needs or disability were also considered.
- The inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. Parental views were gathered and analysed from 74 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Staff views were analysed from 19 responses to the staff online questionnaire, together with 39 from a paper questionnaire.

Inspection team

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