

Northolmes Junior School

Leith View Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 4ET

Inspection dates

4–5 October 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school has improved significantly since the last inspection because leaders and governors have focused sharply on raising the quality of teaching and accelerating pupils' rates of progress.
- The headteacher and her deputy have made sure that staff are motivated and valued. Subject leaders' skilful monitoring and support have ensured that there are fewer inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, than previously.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons. They regularly assess pupils' understanding and use this information very effectively to inform pupils' next steps. This ensures that pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are kind and considerate. They enjoy learning, and are friendly and very understanding of each other's differences.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for. Adults have thorough and up-to-date training in child protection procedures. Pupils know that they should report any concerns they may have. Parents agree that their children are safe.
- Pupils' outcomes have improved in reading, writing and mathematics, so that they are in line with national averages. However, further work is needed to ensure that there is sustained challenge for pupils, from their different starting points, in mathematics and writing.
- Pupils behave well across the school. However, sometimes, pupils' attention can wander when work is not matched closely enough to their needs, especially in Years 3 and 4.
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils is used very effectively to help pupils to catch up, especially in reading. However, funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has not been used carefully enough to make sure that these pupils make good progress.
- Sports funding is used especially well to ensure that pupils are active and understand how to live a healthy life.
- Governors make sure that leaders have more accurate and timely information about pupils' progress, behaviour and safety. New tracking systems are aiding leaders' effectiveness.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the support and teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they make better progress.
- Refine leaders' tracking of pupils' progress, behaviour and safety, so that pupils' progress is further accelerated, and behaviour and safety records are kept to the highest standards.
- Further improve pupils' progress by making sure that teaching across the school provides sustained challenge for pupils from their different starting points, particularly in writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school with a quiet determination that pupils should succeed. They have established an ethos of high expectation, which has led to substantial improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. As a result, outcomes for pupils have risen considerably. Leaders are ambitious for further improvements to pupils' outcomes. Parents recognise and appreciate the positive changes that have been made to the school.
- Over time, senior leaders have made sure that subject leaders support their colleagues very well in all aspects of their work. Leaders have minimised inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, planning and feedback so that pupils' progress is maximised as they move through the school.
- Staff are motivated to constantly improve their work and the progress of pupils. They are responsive to the open culture that leaders have created, in which adults are approachable and supportive of each other. Leaders use appraisal and additional training especially well to improve teachers' skills and subject knowledge. Staff report that they are highly appreciative of the help and training that they have received. They enjoy working at the school.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their self-evaluation is thorough and has helped the school to improve rapidly. The further areas identified as needing additional development are well judged.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils experience good-quality teaching in a range of subjects such as physical education, French and music. Leaders' commitment to ensuring that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain is especially evident through personal, social and health education. In these lessons, pupils learn about fundamental British values such as democracy and diversity, and are able to reflect sensitively on current issues which affect their lives. Through all of this, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed very well. Pupils are thoughtful, caring and kind.
- Extra-curricular activities such as clubs and trips support the curriculum well. One pupil proudly explained how he had been allowed to start the 'coding club' so that he could share his interest in computing with his friends. During our visit, Year 6 pupils were excitedly awaiting the start of a week-long residential, when they have the opportunity to participate in a range of team-building activities, experience independence and practise their resilience skills.
- Pupil premium is used well. Leaders skilfully identify what disadvantaged pupils need to do to catch up with their peers, and provide additional care and support to help them. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' progress is increasingly rapid.
- Sports funding is used very effectively to encourage pupils to be active and to enable staff to teach a broad range of sports. Pupils particularly value the 'sport crew' who coach younger pupils in a variety of sporting activities during playtimes. Lessons include practical advice on how to make sure that pupils eat healthily. Extra-curricular sporting activities are well attended, including badminton and hockey. Pupils regularly

take part in sporting competitions with pupils from other local schools.

- Leaders have made sure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are cared for well. However, expectations of what these pupils are capable of achieving have been too low. Recent changes in leadership have highlighted accurately what needs to be done to improve provision for these pupils, and these changes are under way. For example, extra training in phonics for teachers in Years 3 and 4 is starting to help some pupils to catch up in their reading.

Governance of the school

- The governing body carries out its statutory duties well. Governors have wide-ranging expertise and skills, which they use highly effectively to hold the headteacher to account.
- Governors understand the school's strengths and areas for further development very well. They make sure that funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent appropriately. They identified, rightly, that refinements are needed to the way in which funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used, to help these pupils make more progress.
- Governors have been particularly successful in challenging leaders to improve standards so that teaching and pupils' progress are now good. Their recent focus on improving systems to help senior leaders work more efficiently is well judged. New structures, currently being put in place, are allowing leaders to more effectively track pupils' progress, behaviour and safety. This is enabling leaders to act more promptly to further improve the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors carry out their safeguarding duties effectively. Adults are well trained in child protection procedures and know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's safety. Leaders make sure that help from outside agencies is accessed promptly for pupils who need it.
- Safer recruitment procedures are followed effectively. Trained staff are involved in interviews, appropriate checks are carried out on adults who work in the school and the single central record is up to date and accurate.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in school and in their community. Pupils said that there is always an adult they can talk to in school if they are worried about anything. Parents confirmed that their children feel both safe and happy in school.
- Leaders' record-keeping arrangements, although accurate, extensive and kept securely, are not always kept to the highest standards. Improvements to the school's systems are under way to remedy this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good and improving. Teachers' effective planning makes sure that pupils are appropriately challenged and supported in their learning, especially in Years 5 and 6. Teachers' strong subject knowledge and skilful questioning encourage pupils to think hard during lessons. Teachers make sure that pupils' explanation skills are particularly well developed.
- Teachers use assessment information expertly to identify what pupils already know and what they need to do next. This is especially strong in English and mathematics where it allows pupils to make swift advances in their understanding. Pupils appreciate teachers' insightful feedback, which helps them to know how to improve.
- Pupils take pride in their work, especially when tasks challenge their thinking. Pupils display a strong commitment to learn from mistakes and to improve their understanding. They collaborate with each other well and readily praise others when they are successful.
- A highly consistent approach to teaching writing is resulting in much improved outcomes for pupils. Pupils enjoy writing for different purposes. Teachers make sure that pupils consistently pay close attention to using accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling in their work. Consequently, standards in books are high and pupils' progress in writing has accelerated. However, leaders are not complacent and recognise that further work is needed to ensure that all pupils, across the school, make consistently strong progress from their starting points.
- Teaching in mathematics is helping pupils to make good progress. Effective training and support from subject leaders and external advisers have enabled teachers to meet the demands of the mathematics curriculum increasingly well. Pupils of all abilities now use mathematical equipment to help them work out challenging problems. This is adding to their confidence and deepening their learning.
- Teaching helps pupils to make good progress across a broad range of subjects. For example, in music the specialist teacher encouraged the most able pupils to compose a pentatonic melody, using accurate notation to record their work. In physical education, pupils learning orienteering enthusiastically supported each other to work out the clues to help them find the next control point.
- Leaders have accurately identified that teaching is not helping pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress. New leaders are providing training and advice for teachers so that these pupils are starting to make better progress than they have in the past.
- Reading is taught well throughout the school. Pupils enjoy reading, and regularly choose books from the newly refurbished and well-stocked library. However, occasionally, the most able pupils choose texts which are too easy for them. Similarly, leaders recognise that an improved focus on phonics is needed to help the lower-attaining pupils and pupils who speak English as an additional language to make faster progress.
- From time to time, a small minority of teaching does not match the high standard usually seen throughout the school. For example, occasionally, teachers' use of mathematical language is not sharp enough, or their expectations of pupils' handwriting are not consistently applied. Sometimes, when work is not challenging

enough or the transition from one activity to another is not managed skilfully, pupils' attention can wander, especially that of boys. When such things happen, pupils' progress slows.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The vast majority of pupils are confident, polite and happy. They are eager to talk to adults about their school. There is an open culture in which pupils are keen to learn new things and to discuss how they feel.
- Pupils are quick to challenge stereotypes and are exceptionally understanding of each other's differences. For example, pupils displayed a real respect and empathy for others as they learned the importance of oral communication for people who are visually impaired.
- Teachers develop pupils' resilience skills well. Older pupils highlighted the importance of trying to sort out problems for themselves, when appropriate. Leaders place high priority on making sure that pupils maintain good mental health. Pupils explained that if you have 'poison thoughts' it is important to come up with an 'antidote method' to help solve the problem or issue.
- Pupils value the different ways in which they are able to develop leadership skills. These include becoming part of the sports crew, which leads activities for younger pupils at playtimes. Prefects proudly show adults around the school and act as role models for their peers.
- Pupils understand the need to be careful online. They know not to give out information about their identity and to only communicate online with people they also know in the 'real world'. Pupils know what to do if they come across something on the internet that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. They understand the importance of reporting any concerns they may have to an adult.
- Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of bullying. They said that it is very rare in school but that if anyone does fall out it is quickly sorted out.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and are interested in their work. They are keen to join in and work hard. They show respect and consideration for their teachers and classmates. Parents agree that pupils are well behaved in school.
- Staff are well trained so that playtimes are happy and safe. Pupils emphasised how friendly the school is, and that if anyone does feel sad they can sit on a 'friendship bench' or go to the 'rainbow room' and someone will help them.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with national averages. Leaders keep a close watch on this, and intervene effectively to make sure that pupils who are in danger of falling below

acceptable levels of attendance are helped to attend more frequently. This includes working with families to highlight the importance of regular attendance at school, and keeping in close contact with outside agencies to make sure that pupils who are not in school are safe.

- Records show that staff and outside agencies work well together to make sure that any pupil who needs extra help to maintain good behaviour receives it. Leaders use fixed-term exclusions rarely but effectively. Only a very small number of pupils have been excluded in recent years.
- Occasionally, the behaviour of a few pupils, in some lessons, can be lively. One or two pupils do not pay enough attention to teachers' instructions, particularly in between activities. While staff manage this calmly, sometimes when this happens pupils' progress slows, especially in Years 3 and 4.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2016, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was too slow. However, leaders have made sure that stronger teaching has led to rapid improvements in pupils' progress and attainment. Consequently, outcomes for current pupils are now good.
- The school's information shows that pupils who left Year 6 in 2017 achieved broadly in line with national figures for reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' outcomes for English grammar, punctuation and spelling rose substantially so that they are now above average.
- The rate of progress for disadvantaged pupils is improving quickly over time. In reading, the rate of progress is now above average and their attainment is broadly in line with others nationally. Current disadvantaged pupils make better progress in writing and mathematics than previous groups of disadvantaged pupils. However, leaders recognise that further improvements are necessary to match their better performance in reading. Current disadvantaged pupils' work shows that they make increasingly stronger progress the longer they are part of the school. Work to improve rates of progress in mathematics has been particularly successful for individual pupils who needed to catch up.
- Pupils' progress in writing is much improved. Work in pupils' books demonstrate leaders' high expectations of presentation and handwriting. Pupils appreciate teachers' feedback, which helps them to know precisely how to improve their work. Pupils readily commit to editing and improving their work. Most-able pupils' writing is starting to develop well as they write for different purposes and at increasing length. However, this level of challenge is not consistent across the school.
- In mathematics, pupils' work shows that they are increasingly practising their problem-solving and reasoning skills. This is helping them to make faster progress in mathematics. However, leaders know that more frequent opportunities to practise these skills are necessary in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils achieve well across the whole curriculum. High expectations for presentation and literacy are similar in all subjects. For example, in history pupils practised their reading skills by researching the different reasons why ancient Egyptians lived near the river Nile. In French, pupils carefully translated short passages to answer questions about

pupils' ages and interests. The school's records show high participation rates in additional physical education, with over 90% taking part in extra-curricular sporting activities.

- Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education. Leaders provide especially strong support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, these pupils make additional visits to familiarise themselves with their new schools. Parents praised leaders' preparations for transition. One said that, as a result, his daughter settled in to secondary school much more smoothly than he had anticipated.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make enough progress. This is because, over time, teaching has not precisely met these pupils' learning needs, and teachers' expectations of what these pupils can achieve have been too low. Some amendments have been made, so that current pupils' work is more carefully adapted to meet their needs, but it is too early to see the impact of this work in pupils' outcomes.

School details

Unique reference number	125836
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10036950

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	167
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Helen Oakley
Headteacher	Sharon Anderson
Telephone number	01403 261822
Website	www.northolmes.w-sussex.sch.uk/
Email address	head@northolmesjunior.school
Date of previous inspection	7–8 October 2015

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools and pupils are taught in mixedage classes.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. Few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is just above average.
- The school is federated with Littlehaven Infant School. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and inclusion manager work across both schools. The schools share the same governing body.
- There have been several changes to leadership since the last inspection. The headteacher joined the school in January 2017. The inclusion manager and assistant headteacher joined the school in September 2017. Subject leaders are newly promoted

or new to the school in September 2017.

- There are a private breakfast club and an after-school club on site. These are not managed by the school and are inspected separately.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school uses no providers of alternative provision.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, most jointly with senior leaders. They attended a class assembly and a singing assembly. They conducted a learning walk to observe provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, looked at work in books and discussed pupils' progress and attainment with leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally and met formally with a group of pupils in Year 6. Inspectors observed and spoke to pupils during playtimes. The lead inspector was shown around the school by a small group of pupils.
- The lead inspector took account of 22 survey responses submitted by pupils.
- Parents' views were taken into account through face-to-face informal discussions before school and the 78 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors also took account of four survey responses submitted by staff and met with a group of staff.
- Inspectors checked records and documentation relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, minutes of meetings, staff appraisals and monitoring and improvement.
- Inspectors reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.

Inspection team

Catherine Old, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lea Hannam

Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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