

# Northlands Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115243
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	311883
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Missin

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	255
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alan Morgan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Kevin Watts
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 December 2006
<b>School address</b>	Winifred Road Pitsea Basildon Essex SS13 3JQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 553366
<b>Fax number</b>	01268 552671

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This school is about the same size as most other primary schools. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and a very small number is at an early stage of learning English. A well above average proportion is eligible for free school meals. There has been a high turnover of teaching staff and senior leaders in the last two years. The current headteacher had been in post for one week at the time of the inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The school is now providing a satisfactory standard of education and has sound capacity to secure further improvements. Since the last inspection, the school has consolidated its work and maintained the improvements identified in the monitoring report of July 2007. This has been achieved despite several significant changes to the school's leadership. The procedures that have been established are robust and the new leadership team have a solid foundation on which to build. Leadership and management are now satisfactory overall. Procedures to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and to identify clearly priorities for improvement are working well. The new subject coordinators are developing a clear view of the priorities in their areas and appropriate plans are in place to complete the revision of the senior management team by the appointment of a permanent deputy headteacher. Nevertheless, there is scope to improve the skills of leaders in relation to monitoring and evaluating the school's performance accurately so that all can be involved more fully in moving the school forward.

Although the recent changes in staffing have slowed the pace of change, areas of improvement are evident in the school's work. Standards are beginning to rise across the school and pupils' achievement, which had been inadequate for several years, is now at least satisfactory. Standards in Year 6 have improved significantly since last year and these pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. Elsewhere in the school, standards in reading, mathematics and science are now broadly average but remain below average in writing.

Since September 2007, the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning have improved. Teaching is satisfactory, with some good features, and this explains the better progress pupils are now making. Teachers manage pupils well and promote their speaking and listening skills effectively. Most lessons are taught at a brisk pace and pupils are clear about what is expected of them. A weakness is that work is not consistently planned to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities in the class, and particularly those who are more able. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is rightly focused on the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills but is enhanced by a sound range of visits and extra-curricular activities. The school provides good pastoral support for vulnerable pupils and those who may be at risk. Provision is well organised and sensitively targeted to ensure that pupils are encouraged and supported and specialist advice is sought when appropriate. Assessment information is used satisfactorily to monitor progress and to set pupils helpful learning targets.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Behaviour in class and around the school is satisfactory but a few pupils still find following instructions difficult. Pupils indicate that there is occasionally some rough play at breaktimes and that inappropriate behaviour in class sometimes interrupts lessons. Pupils know what is needed for them to adopt a safe and healthy lifestyle. They enjoy school and make a sound contribution to the school and wider community through their work on the school council and in their support of several charities. Despite the school's best efforts, attendance remains below average.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards and accelerate the rate of progress made by pupils, especially in writing.

- Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that tasks are more closely matched to pupils' abilities, especially for those who are more able.
- Ensure the leadership team builds on existing systems to rigorously monitor and evaluate their impact on raising standards and accelerating achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils enter the school with standards that are broadly average in reading and mathematics but often lower in writing. Standards in Year 6 have been below or well below average in recent years, though there has been a modest year-on-year improvement since 2005. In 2007, standards were below average in mathematics and science and well below average in English. Pupils in Year 6 have achieved less well than expected for several years. However, pupils in the current Year 6 are now making at least satisfactory progress. They are on track to meet realistic targets and reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In other year groups, pupils are making satisfactory progress even though standards in pupils' writing are still not high enough. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress overall.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils understand the importance of healthy living. They are appreciative of the school's efforts to improve school meals and are pleased to be able to take part in regular sports and games activities. Most feel safe at school but some are concerned about the occasional rough play at breaktimes. Behaviour is sound, but some pupils and parents are concerned that occasional incidents of inappropriate responses in lessons interrupts the learning of others. Pupils acknowledge that bullying sometimes takes place but that it is dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils say that they enjoy school. Although attendance has improved recently, it has remained stubbornly below average despite the school's best efforts. Too many pupils arrive late and this limits the effectiveness of the start of the school day. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Their attitudes to learning and basic skills indicate that pupils are adequately prepared for their future education and beyond.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good features. The strongest teaching is seen in Years 5 and 6. The good teaching is improving speaking and listening skills well through the effective use of 'talk-partners' and by encouraging pupils to contribute to class discussion. Opportunities for pupils to assess how well they and their friends are doing are successfully helping them understand how they can improve. However, lessons are sometimes not planned well enough to ensure that activities will extend the understanding of pupils of different abilities and especially to challenge those who are more able. Improvements in teaching are beginning to help pupils make better progress than before, but the overall quality of teaching is not yet consistently high enough across the school.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides a satisfactory range of activities which cover all the required subjects. There is a clear emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills to address the underachievement of recent years and to raise standards. This includes a strong focus on developing speaking and listening skills and improving pupils' confidence with language. The school also works hard to develop pupils personally, socially and emotionally. A good range of visits and visitors and themed weeks, such as the Year 6 technology week, helps to make learning more interesting. The school does not provide enough activities to challenge and develop the most able pupils. There is scope to provide additional practical activities in lessons to engage pupils and interest them more in learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school is committed to pupils' care and welfare. Pupils who are vulnerable or may have specific needs are looked after well. Possible risks are minimised and child protection procedures are taken seriously. The school assesses pupils' needs accurately and the introduction of a learning mentor and a pupil support worker are effectively helping to meet these needs. The school is a safe and welcoming community where pupils feel valued and supported and where they are ready to learn. There is good liaison with other agencies outside the school when required. Assessment information is used satisfactorily to set targets for pupils and to show them how to improve. Pupils understand their targets and believe that they are helping them to get better. However, some systems are quite recent and their impact is only just beginning to have an effect on attainment and progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Staff and governors have a realistic view of how well the school is doing and what is needed to make it better. They share a common view for the future and a commitment to further improvement. While procedures for checking how well the school is doing are satisfactory, they have not yet been in place long enough to have raised standards in the Year 6 national tests. There are, however, indications that things are starting to improve. There is a determination to improve and the school has set challenging targets for pupils to reach by the end of Year 6. The school has a clear picture showing that pupils are achieving satisfactorily in English, mathematics and science. This is a school that has had difficulties in the past but has now the turned the corner. The new leadership team is in a satisfactory position to take the school forward and build on the solid foundations that been put in place.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 January 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Northlands Junior School, Basildon, SS13 3JQ

Thank you for making my colleague and me so welcome when we came to the school recently to see how well you were doing.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school:

- You enjoy representing others on the school council. We wish you well in your discussions about the new tuck shop.
- We like the way in which you talk very confidently with your partner in lessons and contribute very sensibly to class discussions.
- You like the way in which art lessons are taught in the new creative-arts room. The work displayed there is very attractive.
- The school looks after you and cares for you well.

There are a few things that we thought could be better.

- You need to continue to work hard to improve the standard of all your work and particularly your writing.
- Teachers need to provide work which will interest and challenge all of you, all of the time.
- Your senior teachers need to make sure that the school continues to improve and that you are all making the best possible progress in your learning.

You can do also your bit by asking your parents to make sure you come to school as regularly as you can to enjoy all of the interesting things going on. We wish you well for the future.

Paul Missin

Lead inspector