

Janet Duke Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	114993
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	378975
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2012
Lead inspector	Graham Preston

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	576
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Spicer
Headteacher	Harriet Phelps-Knights
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2009
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	16–17 January 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Karin Heap

Additional inspector

Peter Lacey-Hastings

Additional inspector

Graham Preston

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 21 teachers in 22 lessons as well as carrying out a number of 'learning walks' to listen to pupils read, evaluate the quality of pupils' writing and observe the teaching of phonics. Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body and groups of pupils and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding practices, the school's self-evaluation and development planning. Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers in 62 returned questionnaires.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school. It was established in September 2010 when the adjoining junior school closed and merged with the infant school. Prior to this the head of the infant school assumed executive leadership of the junior school and was subsequently appointed as headteacher of the new primary school. In summer 2011, the school fell well short of reaching government floor standards. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with ten per cent from other ethnic heritages. The school has a higher than average proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and the proportion of those known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The school runs a daily breakfast club and after-school club. It has several awards including the Activemark for sport, the Eco School Bronze award and Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	4
Achievement of pupils	4
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the achievement of pupils.
- Janet Duke Primary School is a new school that has worked hard to address considerable weaknesses present when the school was formed. Staff morale is high and considerable progress has been made in creating a positive and safe learning environment.
- The great majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and most behave considerately. There has been significant improvement in their attendance.
- It has taken time to make the necessary improvements in pupils’ attainment and rates of progress. Both were inadequate in Summer 2011 when Year 6 failed to reach the government floor targets. The majority of pupils did not reach the expected levels in writing and mathematics.
- Following a local authority review of the school’s progress in May 2011, there has been a concerted effort to improve teaching and to provide an extensive range of additional learning support. This has been sufficiently effective to ensure that pupils now make satisfactory progress in their learning.
- Teaching is now satisfactory, but not yet good enough to help older pupils make up lost ground. The school recognises from its own tracking data that current Year 6 pupils, and to some extent those in Year 5, are not on target to reach the levels expected for their age in mathematics and English by the time they leave the school. Learning tasks and targets are not always clear enough and learning support staff are not always well enough used to accelerate learning.
- The headteacher and her leadership team demonstrate that they have achieved significant school improvement through accurate self-evaluation and well-focused action, including training, mentoring and support for staff.
- Representatives of the governing body are well informed, although not all are fully involved in the school improvement process.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in order to raise their attainment, particularly in writing and mathematics, so that progress is good in 75 % of lessons by December 2012, through:
 - improving the teaching of phonics so that pupils are better able to blend letters and sounds and apply what they have learnt to new words and contexts
 - maintaining an appropriate balance of teacher-led and pupil-centred learning activities in lessons that makes full use of the learning support staff
 - providing clear and achievable learning tasks and targets, shared with pupils, that enable them to make demonstrably good progress in each lesson
 - ensuring that writing and numeracy skills are taught across all subjects, to include a focus on improving pupils' presentation and accuracy
 - developing marking practice that involves pupils in assessing their own progress and shows them how they can improve in terms of their National Curriculum targets.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - where possible, recruiting governors with wider experience and expertise to the governing body and ensuring that more governors are actively involved in monitoring, evaluating and improving the school
 - increasing communication with parents and carers to help them better understand and appreciate school changes and be more actively involved in their children's learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The inadequate achievement of pupils in 2011 is also evident in the current Year 6 classes, although improvements in teaching and learning are improving progress. Here, many pupils' writing is limited in range and complexity with considerable inaccuracy. Reading is stronger but still below average levels in both Year 2 and Year 6. There is a concerted effort by teachers to help pupils retrieve lost ground in mathematics. This was evident in a Year 5 class where pupils were rightly practising partitioning for subtraction - a technique pupils would normally have learnt much earlier. Overall the school's progress data show that although older pupils are now progressing faster, they are unlikely to reach the levels expected given their Key Stage 1 results by the time they leave. More positively, progress in the younger years is stronger, particularly where there is good teaching. For example, pupils in a Year 4 class demonstrated imagination, complexity and accuracy in their story writing.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Children start school with skills below those expected for their age. Most make satisfactory progress and children go on to reach average levels in personal, social and physical development. Their attainment in aspects of numeracy and literacy is lower. In Years 1 and 2 pupils continue to make expected progress although a considerable number experience some difficulties with their reading. All pupils have regular daily phonics sessions in which they learn the sounds that letters make. In those sessions they make progress but when working on their own, many pupils struggle to blend the sounds to make different words or recognise and pronounce unfamiliar words. This slows pupils' progress in reading. There are no significant differences in the progress of pupils from different social and ethnic backgrounds. The considerable support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs ensures that they do at least as well as their classmates, particularly in Years 3 and 6 where they achieve better than expected levels of progress. The great majority of parents and carers who completed the questionnaire believe their children are making good progress. Inspectors found that most pupils make satisfactory progress and there is significant underachievement in Year 6.

Quality of teaching

Over 90% of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed that their children are well taught. Almost all questionnaire responses from pupils showed they agree that they are well taught all or most of the time. Inspectors found that teaching has improved; it has been satisfactory over the last six months but it is not yet good. In the Reception classes, learning activities are mostly well organised to help pupils develop their physical, social and personal skills. Phonics teaching in Reception and Years 1 and 2 is often effective, but not consistently so. Pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to practise their phonic skills and apply them in new contexts.

Good teaching in the different years is characterised by engaging and challenging learning activities, well matched to pupils' current capabilities with good use of teaching assistants. It develops pupils' social skills, encouraging them to work together, and challenges them to reflect on what they are learning. Less effective teaching has less clarity about what pupils need to achieve in the lesson and insufficient focus on accuracy and presentation. In addition, teachers talk too much. Marking of pupils' work is regular and most teachers include an improvement point, although there is limited evidence that pupils respond to this guidance. The best practice seen provided opportunities for pupils to assess their work against their National Curriculum level targets, although this system is still at an early stage of development. The planned curriculum now provides a satisfactory framework for progression for pupils of all abilities. The school organises a considerable range of additional learning opportunities and interventions to complement classroom teaching and help all pupils make better progress, particularly disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

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The school has had some success in its efforts to establish a calm and purposeful school environment. Attendance has improved substantially and is now in line with the national average for primary schools. There has been a major reduction in fixed-term exclusions and a much reduced requirement to use staff to support pupils with behavioural needs. The staff questionnaires praise the improved school atmosphere and are echoed by outside health and educational support staff who visit the school. However, the parents' questionnaire responses are more mixed with around a fifth still having some concerns about behaviour in lessons. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' attitudes to learning and most lessons seen were orderly and purposeful. Even so, a number of pupils report lessons are occasionally disrupted and where teaching is less engaging, some pupils drift off task. Pupils appreciate the 'caring' staff and know who to go to for help and support. Although a significant number say there are still disagreements and name calling, the school generally deals with any incidents of any type of bullying promptly and effectively. Pupils feel safe in school. The daily breakfast club provides a secure and nutritious start to the day and behaviour is good there and in the after-school setting.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is appreciated by parents for the way she has led the merger of the two schools to create a cohesive primary school. Considerable improvements have been made in a number of areas including pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance which, together with better staff morale, have contributed to a more positive and coherent school ethos. School leadership is developing steadily with senior and middle leaders fully involved in rigorously monitoring and evaluating all aspects of provision including teaching. This monitoring has been used successfully to identify areas of weakness and to provide programmes of training and mentoring to improve classroom practice. The school's leaders have also established thorough tracking of pupils' progress as well as more secure assessment practice through moderation activities. Leaders use performance data to identify underachievement and provide a range of support to meet the needs of different pupils including, for example, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, boys and others identified as gifted and talented. As a result of this support, there has been a trend of sustained improvement, although historic weaknesses in attainment remain. Overall the progress made since the new school was established clearly indicates it has the capacity to improve.

In an effort to better engage pupils in their learning, the school has introduced a curriculum with an international dimension that interests pupils and contributes positively to their social development and cultural awareness. The school has well-developed child protection procedures and meets all safeguarding requirements. Governance is satisfactory. Particular governors are well informed and closely involved in school improvement but the governing body recognises that other representatives are less involved and that it lacks breadth in expertise and experience. The governing body's links with parents and carers, particularly those who have a reluctance to be involved in or communicate with the school, are limited.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

18 January 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Janet Duke Primary School, Basildon, SS15 5LS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. While your school has various strengths we have decided that, as a matter of priority, the school needs to ensure that all of you make sufficient progress in mathematics and English by the time you leave school. Some of you older pupils in the school are in danger of not doing this. Because of this we have given the school a 'notice to improve'.

Your better attendance shows that many of you now like coming to school. In lessons, we could see that most of you work together and listen carefully to the teacher. We were impressed by the generally good behaviour in lessons and around the school. However, we are aware from your questionnaires and from talking to you that a number of you are concerned about the misbehaviour of a few. The great majority of you say you feel safe in school and appreciate the help and support you receive. We were impressed with the care your teachers take to mark your work regularly and explain what you need to do next to improve it.

The inspectors spent most of the time looking at how well you are making progress and what could be improved. We have asked the teachers to:

- help those of you in the lower years to better understand how you can use letter sounds to improve your reading
- set out what exactly they want you to learn in each lesson and have shorter presentations to give you more time to complete your classwork
- give you more time to follow their suggestions and improve your work so you can better meet your reading, writing and mathematics targets
- give you lots of opportunity in different lessons to improve your writing and mathematics.

Finally, we have asked the headteacher and governing body to provide more opportunities for your parents and carers to find out about the changes taking place in the school and talk about your progress and any concerns they may have. You can help by always taking care to read and follow your teachers' advice and by showing more care in your presentation and spelling.

Yours sincerely

Graham Preston
Lead inspector

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