

# Quilters Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	114801
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	378931
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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>	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>	248
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gill Palmer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Wade
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 May 2009
<b>School address</b>	Laindon Road Billericay CM12 9LD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01277 652339
<b>Fax number</b>	01277 631792
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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	22–23 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	378931



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Selwyn Ward

Additional inspector

Helena Evans

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 24 lessons taught by nine teachers, with a particular focus on the curriculum and its impact on pupils' achievement and personal development. Inspectors listened to pupils read, and spoke with parents and carers, groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, school development planning, school self-evaluation, leaders' monitoring of teaching and the questionnaire responses of a sample of 150 pupils, 25 staff and 153 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

This school is similar in size to the average primary school but, because it caters only for pupils in Key Stage 2, there are twice as many pupils in each year group as in the average primary. Most pupils are White British; only a small proportion come from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. There are more boys than girls in most year groups. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average. The large majority of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The school meets the government's current floor standards for progress and attainment. It has Activemark, Heart Start Mark, International Schools and Investors In People awards, and has Healthy Schools status. The headteacher was appointed in September 2011.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. Its focus on pupils' personal development is an outstanding feature of the curriculum and contributes to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Together with pupils' good progress in lessons, the development of what the school calls 'soft skills' ensures that the school lives up to its motto of 'Care, Learn, Respect'. Despite many impressive features, the school is not outstanding because not enough teaching is fully effective in meeting the needs of different ability groups to ensure that they all make outstanding progress in developing key skills.
- Pupils achieve well and their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is consistently above average.
- Teachers set very high expectations and pupils strive to rise to the challenges set for them. Sometimes, however, too much is expected. Pupils learn less well when too many learning objectives are crammed into a lesson. This particularly slows the learning of lower-attaining pupils when they are confused about the steps they need to take to complete a task or move their learning on. The curriculum is good, but the current ability setting arrangements for literacy and numeracy lessons are not fully meeting pupils' needs. Work is not always matched to pupils' different capabilities within sets, and lower-attaining pupils are too often taught by support staff rather than teachers.
- Leaders' monitoring has maintained the good quality of teaching in this well-run school. Likewise, their careful tracking of each pupil's progress and the identification of prompt extra support where needed has ensured the consistently above-average performance of pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. This is due in no small part to the efforts made to build pupils' confidence and their 'soft skills', which include perseverance, politeness, punctuality, honesty, reliability, sensitivity and courage. Pupils listen very attentively in lessons and they work with sustained concentration.

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

- Increase the proportion of lessons where outstanding teaching results in pupils of all abilities making outstanding progress by ensuring that:
  - learning objectives are sharply focused and always set out what pupils are expected to learn, and not just the activities to be carried out
  - pupils have success criteria that are matched to their different capabilities
  - opportunities for pupils to assess each other's work are consolidated and extended across all subjects
  - plans are implemented to alter the way literacy and numeracy sessions are organised, so that pupils of all abilities are always appropriately challenged and supported.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Around 60% of parents returned questionnaires. All say their children make good progress. They are correct. Pupils join the school with above average attainment in their infant school assessments. Both boys and girls achieve well, so that their attainment at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics is the equivalent of around two terms ahead of the national average. Around half the pupils attain the higher Level 5 in the Year 6 tests. This is an above-average proportion. Leaders have ambitious plans, however, to further raise attainment for more-able pupils, including offering pupils the chance to go beyond Level 5. The small number of pupils who join the school with a reading age lower than their chronological age benefit from focused support in reading that drives their rapid improvement.

Pupils do well in lessons because teachers' expectations are unremittingly high. Especially in English and mathematics, lessons are characterised by questioning and problem-solving dilemmas that challenge pupils to extend their thinking. Pupils readily acknowledge this. As a Year 5 pupil explained, 'You think outside your comfort zone and the teachers encourage you to think creatively.' It is not just the highest attainers who do well. A parent described how her daughter had benefited from encouragement that made her more determined to succeed: 'Before, I felt she was mid-stream and just doing okay. Now, she has been given extra tuition in mathematics and pushed harder in literacy, and is keen to get into the top set.'

On occasion, the challenge for pupils can be too great. Where the teacher introduces a large number of learning points into a lesson, it can be confusing for some pupils, who struggle to keep up. Nevertheless, progress overall is good for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. These pupils benefit from tailored support based on careful analysis of their specific learning needs. The headteacher and leadership team are currently in the process of reviewing the setting arrangements for English and mathematics to ensure that work is better matched to the range different capabilities within setted groups and that

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lower-attaining pupils, including those with moderate learning difficulties, are always taught by teachers rather than support staff.

## Quality of teaching

Parents and pupils express exceptionally positive views on the quality of teaching. Inspectors confirm that teaching is good, and this results in pupils making good progress in their learning. Teachers plan work with a high level of challenge that keeps pupils on their toes. They involve pupils in evaluating their own and each other's learning, although this is less successful in those lessons where the learning objectives are diffuse or where they set out what it is that pupils are expected to do rather than what they are expected to learn. Teachers issue success criteria in most lessons, but these often only summarise the steps to be taken to complete a task. They are not routinely matched to pupils' different abilities. Similarly, work in lessons is not always matched precisely to pupils' different learning needs. This is a key factor that prevents pupils from making outstanding progress in lessons.

A notable strength of teaching in this school is the emphasis placed on pupils developing and applying 'thinking skills' in lessons across the curriculum. As a pupil explained, 'They get my brain working quicker.' The focus on 'thinking skills' encourages pupils to challenge themselves as they test each other's arguments. Pupils in Year 4, for example, together completed a BBC ecology quiz by extrapolating likely answers to unfamiliar questions from facts and figures that they already knew. The range of 'soft skills', introduced this year, are also actively referred to and drawn upon in lessons. They help pupils to grow in confidence and so contribute greatly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Referring to teachers' marking that identifies strengths and weaknesses as 'two stars and a wish', a Year 3 pupil explained, 'The wishes help me know what to do next.' In most classes, marking results in a productive learning dialogue as pupils write their responses to teachers' comments. The use of peer-assessment, where pupils mark and comment on each other's work, has been stepped up this term. It is having a positive impact on pupils' learning but it is not a consistent feature across the school and in all subjects.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils get on exceptionally well together. They are polite and mutually supportive. This extends beyond their excellent conduct to the learning behaviour they demonstrate in lessons. Throughout the school, boys and girls of all abilities show that they are eager to learn. They listen very attentively to their teachers and to each other's contributions in lessons. When moving between groups or to individual activities, they invariably settle to work quickly and without fuss. As a result, they mostly get a lot done. Parents and the pupils themselves endorse this picture of outstanding behaviour, confirming it as the norm at this school. Several parents reported being stymied by the Ofsted questionnaire questions on bullying. One summed up the views of many, writing, 'I don't know of

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any incidents but I am confident that the headteacher and staff would respond effectively.' Pupils refer to rare incidents of, for example, girls being excluded from friendship groups, but they are adamant that these are quickly sorted out. Pupils know the hazards that they must be alert to in using the internet, and they know about cyber-bullying and what to do if ever they encounter it. Pupils feel very safe at school and parents express full confidence that the school keeps their children safe.

Attendance is high. This reflects pupils' great enjoyment of school, and the effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents, who value and are very supportive of their children's education.

### **Leadership and management**

Parents reserve particular praise for the headteacher. Dozens wrote to comment on what they describe as huge improvements in the short time since he joined the school. Parents are especially appreciative of the improvements this year in communications. As one explained, 'The headteacher has introduced weekly "open night" sessions where parents can come in, view children's work and speak to their teachers to discuss their child's progress. He has also introduced "Parent Link" meetings where parents can make suggestions for further improvement or suggest new ideas and initiatives, which have subsequently been implemented.' Another parent pointed to other improvements, including to the curriculum, explaining that, 'Quilters Junior is constantly evolving, has new ideas, new initiatives and a great sense of belonging. It is one big family.' Attainment has improved since the last inspection and the school has been successful in tackling the issues for development from the last inspection report. This, along with accurate self-evaluation, shows the school's good capacity for continued improvement.

Although the headteacher has been the driving force behind a number of changes, other members of the leadership team are fully on board with the improvements and the plans for further development. All have an understanding of performance data and are involved in monitoring teaching, including through paired lesson observations. These now focus less on the features of teaching, placing greater emphasis on how well pupils are learning. Teachers are given pointers on how learning can be accelerated, and these are linked to training and support. Leaders ensure that no pupil suffers from discrimination. As an example, the participation rate in the impressive array of school clubs is very high. The successful promotion of equal opportunities is also evident in the equally good performance of both boys and girls; there is not the gender divide at this school that is seen nationally.

The governing body is supportive. Its members visit regularly so that they are not just dependent on the headteacher and staff for knowing what happens in school. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements fully meet regulatory requirements, and are rigorous in methodically reviewing and updating school policies and procedures.

The curriculum provides pupils with many memorable learning experiences and so contributes to their good achievement. Pupils especially enjoy the cross-curricular

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topics organised around popular children's novels such as the Harry Potter and Narnia series. Literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced through work in other subjects, so that, for example, in a personal, social and health education lesson in Year 6, pupils discussing the 'soft skill' of sensitivity were pressed to 'uplevel' their contributions by extending their vocabulary. Pupils take a keen interest in the wider world. They correspond, for example, with pupils in a school in Uganda for which they have raised funds. The 'houses' into which pupils are organised each adopt and raise funds for a nominated charity. Such activities contribute strongly to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The 'soft skills' initiative, though only recently introduced, already permeates the curriculum. Pupils respond exceptionally well. They not only aspire to demonstrate the 'soft skills' themselves but they also look out for them in others, writing thoughtful commendations for other pupils whose actions show these skills in practice. Parents acknowledge the impact of this initiative, which they credit with 'instilling a sense of pride in the pupils for their school and themselves'.



## 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](http://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.**

26 March 2012

Dear Quiltonians



### **Inspection of Quilters Junior School, Billericay, CM12 9LD**

Thank you for welcoming us when we came to visit your school, and particular thanks to all of you who completed the questionnaire and those of you who told us about the school. Along with your parents, you told us that Quilters Junior is a good school. We agree. The school is well run and the good teaching helps you to achieve well so that your attainment is above average. We were impressed by the exemplary behaviour we saw during the inspection, and we were assured by parents that what we saw was typical. You all get on very well together, and that helps to make Quilter Junior a happy, friendly place to be. Your excellent attendance also makes a positive contribution to your achievement.

What particularly stands out about your school is your excellent personal development. As you learn about and adopt the 'soft skills', they are helping you to become confident, well-rounded young people. The skills you develop, and your academic success, should stand you in very good stead when you move on to secondary school.

Although the school is good, the headteacher, staff and governors are all keen for it to be even better. With that aim in mind, we have suggested some ways in which you could be helped to make still faster progress in lessons. We have asked teachers to make sure that the learning objectives for lessons always make it clear to you what it is you are expected to learn, and that the success criteria are matched to everyone's different abilities. The headteacher and leadership team have already decided that it would be a good idea to change the setting arrangements for literacy and numeracy. We have asked them to push ahead with this change so that you are all always appropriately challenged and supported in these important lessons. Peer-marking, where you mark each other's work, is helping you to think more critically about your writing and mathematics, so we have asked staff to extend this to cover all subjects in every class. You can help to drive further school improvement by taking extra care in evaluating your own and each other's work.

Thank you again for being so helpful and welcoming, and our very best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Selwyn Ward  
Lead inspector

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