

# Thorpe Greenways Junior School

Greenways, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 3BS

## Inspection dates

5–6 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not consistently strong enough in mathematics to ensure that all pupils reach their potential. There is too little focus in some classes on helping pupils apply their skills to real-life problems.
- Pupils of higher ability could be doing better at times because teaching is not always pitched at the right level to help them make faster progress.
- Some lessons move at only a slow pace because occasionally the time allocated is too long for the work planned.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and school leaders have tackled the previously very slow progress of pupils in Year 3 by eliminating inadequate teaching.
- Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. They are polite and well-mannered and try to live up to the school's 'Golden Values'.
- School leaders and governors make sure developments are not just short-term but become deeply embedded in the work of staff and the school.
- Marking has improved considerably and plays a key role in the learning of pupils. Pupils understand what they need to do to meet their personal goals.
- Standards are starting to rise now that pupils make more even progress across the school and build more seamlessly on their experiences in the infant school.
- The process of working jointly with another school is in its infancy but is already bringing benefits to the school and to the pupils' achievement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons, of which eight were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone discussion was also held with and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 142 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Bimla Thakur	Additional Inspector
Noureddin Khassal	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- Most pupils are from families of White British heritages but an increasing proportion are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium (which is extra money given to schools for pupils in local authority care, from Forces families and who are known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is broadly average as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school has worked jointly with the neighbouring infant school, as a federation, from September 2012 under the leadership of one headteacher, two heads of school and a single governing body.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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

- Strengthen teaching further in order to speed up progress and raise attainment by:
  - ensuring that more able pupils are given more difficult work in order to reach higher levels
  - increasing the pace of learning by making sure that pupils spend less time listening to explanations of work they have already mastered.
- Increase the pupils' progress in mathematics by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills by solving problems in their everyday work
  - putting in place a programme to develop further the skills and expertise of all staff in teaching mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The pupils' above average attainment when they leave the school is not high enough in relation to their above average starting points in Year 3. Pupils make adequate rather than good progress. Year 6 test results fell in 2012 and represented slow progress for this group of pupils. This was because in spite of catching up in Years 5 and 6 this group had made little progress in Year 3.
- Weaker progress in Year 3 has been tackled successfully. Progress is more even across the school although still not consistently at a good level. Pupils reach Year 6 with better skills and rising attainment. Progress is improving in reading, writing and mathematics. Greater collaboration between staff in the two schools is strengthening continuity of the pupils' experiences as they move from Years 2 to 3 so that their learning is not disrupted.
- The new calculation policy enables skills to develop systematically and build on the techniques developed in the infant school. Pupils learn a method they can use with confidence. However, mathematical understanding is not always deepened by letting the pupils apply their skills to real-life problems. More-able pupils in Year 6 are extended by working with a teacher from a local grammar school on mathematical challenges they would not otherwise meet until after they have left the school.
- The school focuses sharply on making sure all pupils can read fluently by the end of Year 6. Regular daily reading sessions, sometimes before school, provide extra help for those needing it. Phonics lessons (letters and the sounds they make) build on from their infant school experiences. Wider reading skills such as reading for understanding develop more slowly and so training is being planned for staff as to how they can better teach these skills.
- Pupils attracting the pupil premium funding are making improving progress so that the gap between their attainment and national expectations is small. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make expected progress. Their needs are identified at the earliest possible time so that the most appropriate action can be put in place.

### The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching in lessons that require improvement is not set at the right level to provide hard enough work for more able pupils. At times when teachers speak for too long at the beginning of lessons, pupils cannot get on with activities and develop their independence. This is particularly the case in some mathematics lessons, where teachers do not have sufficient subject expertise to put over new ideas correctly.
- More good and better teaching is being seen in all year groups because teachers have consistently higher expectations of what the pupils can achieve. Classrooms are calm and behaviour well-managed. Displays, whiteboards and 'visualisers' all help to provide a stimulating environment for learning. Teachers in these lessons use questions to gauge understanding and ensure that all pupils remain focused on their learning. Pupils are fully involved when work is set at the right level, the purpose of what they are doing is made clear to them and they know how to check whether or not their learning is successful.
- Additional adults make a significant contribution to pupils' learning both in lessons and when supporting pupils outside the classroom. Teachers quickly move teaching assistants to support

pupils when they spot that additional help is needed. They skilfully adapt work to tackle the problems being experienced.

- Teachers' marking recognises pupils' success and lets them know the steps to take to improve their work. Pupils respond for example by redrafting pieces of writing or answering a question in mathematics to check a skill they have just learnt. Subsequent work shows errors being eliminated and improvements made. Pupils also regularly use their 'target books' in lessons as a reminder of what to do to reach the next level.
- Homework has been changed in response to concerns raised by parents. The new 'Inspire' and 'Improve' activities are viewed positively by pupils and have led to pupils making greater effort and more pupils finishing their homework. When tasks need a computer, resources are made available in school for pupils who don't have one at home.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The pupils' good attitudes contribute considerably to their learning and are based on positive relationships with their teachers. Pupils respond quickly when teachers have to deal with any infrequent incidents of behaviour which disturbs other pupils' learning. They collaborate well such as when discussing ideas or checking each other's work.
- Pupils are continually encouraged to show the school's 'Golden Values' of 'kindness, respect, positivity and patience'. These have been instrumental, as far as pupils are concerned, in their improved behaviour. These values are central to the recently revised behaviour policy and consistently carried out by staff. Pupils are keen to earn 'vivos' which they can then cash-in for rewards decided by the school council.
- Pupils enjoy school and the experiences it provides for them. This is reflected in their rising attendance. The breakfast club is making a difference to the attendance of some pupils. Pupils take responsibilities seriously such as looking after playground equipment and helping others. Pupils also take the lead during half-hour 'Pow Wow' meetings between their parents and carers and class teacher.
- Discussions with a range of pupils show that they feel safe in school, which is a view shared by their parents and carers. Incidents of bullying and racism are rare and felt not to be an issue by most pupils. Pupils understand what constitutes a risky situation and how to deal with it. Training in e-safety has focused on 'cyber bullying' and pupils are quite aware of rules to be followed and who to contact if they have a concern.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Hard work and tenacity are the features of the headteacher's strong leadership. The staff team is very aware of the headteacher's plans for improving the school further. Improvements in teaching have led to better pupil progress, although it has not yet reached a consistently good level.
- School leaders use a wide variety of methods to check on the quality of teaching and its impact on the pupils' learning. Subject and year leaders are playing an increasing role in providing additional guidance particularly with lesson planning and leading developments in their areas. The process for setting targets for teachers to improve their work is rigorously implemented. Only teaching that leads to good pupil progress is rewarded.

- The school focuses on ensuring that all pupils have the same chance. It helps pupils who struggle with their learning by carefully checking where they are falling behind their targets and putting action in place to help them to catch up. Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional support in school and to subsidise places in the breakfast club for pupils attracting this funding.
- The headteacher is strongly committed to working in partnership with others and continually searches for examples of good practice elsewhere that can improve the school. This includes effective engagement with the local authority whose support has developed the expertise of the new literacy and numeracy leaders and provided training for school leaders and governors in better understanding information about pupils' progress.
- The arrangements for organising lessons and teaching are increasingly providing opportunities for pupils to use their reading, writing and mathematical skills in 'real-life' situations and across subjects. Pupils have plenty of opportunity to use new technology for research and to present their work. Music makes an important contribution to the pupils' experiences including singing at a local theatre and the orchestra's annual participation in a music festival in France. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted at every opportunity including in lessons of 'philosophy for children' which encourage pupils to think more deeply about questions.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors were instrumental in federating the two schools in order to bring greater similarity in pupils' experiences. The new governing body is well led and establishing itself quickly. Governors are developing a model for their role by researching how the most effective governing bodies operate. Their expertise is developed through regular training and reports from the headteacher. These now focus on key matters such as the quality of teaching and pupil progress. This means governors are very clear about how the headteacher rewards good performance and tackles improvements where needed. Financial planning across the federation is already enabling resources such as new technology to be shared more efficiently. Governors are fully aware of how pupil premium funding is allocated and that it is improving the results of eligible pupils. The governing body ensures that procedures to keep pupils safe are rigorously implemented and their impact regularly reviewed with help from the local authority.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114777
<b>Local authority</b>	Southend-on-Sea
<b>Inspection number</b>	400373

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	480
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Matthews
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ashley Eastwood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01702 468057
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