

Sparrow Farm Junior School

Sparrow Farm Drive, Feltham, TW14 0DG

Inspection dates 10–11 January 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not make fast enough progress.
- This is because teaching is not consistently strong enough to promote fast learning.
- Leaders and governors are not always rigorous enough in planning for school improvement and do not always have sufficiently high expectations for their pupils.
- School leaders carry out regular lesson observations but are not always demanding enough in how they expect the teachers to promote fast learning.
- Teachers do not always expect enough of their pupils.
- The pace of lessons is sometimes too slow, preventing pupils from doing their own work and finding things out for themselves.
- Teachers do not routinely insist on good spelling in pupils' written work.
- When marking books, teachers do not always provide clear guidance on what pupils need to do to improve their work.
- Governors do not always ask sufficiently searching questions about the impact of the teaching on pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are articulate, confident, polite young people. They feel safe, behave well and attend school regularly.
- Parents and carers, and governors, report that the school is safe and secure, and that the pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils' good behaviour reflects the school's strong commitment to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils respect others and enjoy celebrating one another's successes.
- In Year 6, generally stronger teaching has resulted in an increased proportion of pupils gaining high levels in national tests.
- Pupils enjoy the creative links between the topics they study, the stories they write and books they read.
- Computers are used successfully to help pupils learn in class and to provide a useful link between school and home when pupils do their homework.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 part-lessons, taught by eight class teachers, across a range of subjects, nearly all observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, looked at samples of their work and attended assemblies.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the views of staff in 28 questionnaires.
- There were 19 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. Inspectors spoke to several parents and carers during the course of the inspection and took account of responses to the school's own surveys of parents' and carers' views.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including development plans, the self-evaluation report, local authority evaluation reports, the data on pupils' attainment and progress, safeguarding information, records relating to behaviour and safety, and the governing body minutes.
- The school does not have alternative provision, for example any resource unit for pupils with special educational needs.

Inspection team

Natalia Power, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Christopher Crouch	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sparrow Farm Junior is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is slightly higher than the national average.
- Two thirds of pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. A higher proportion of pupils than is typical speak English as an additional language, but few pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils are on the special needs register, both at school action and school action plus, including those with statements of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Teachers should make sure that they:
 - raise the level of challenge, so that all pupils are expected to do as well as they can
 - provide pupils with more opportunities to learn independently
 - keep up a brisk pace in lessons, so that pupils do not spend too much time listening passively to the teacher
 - ensure a higher standard of spelling in pupils' work
 - provide more guidance in their marking on what pupils need to do to improve their work.
- Leaders and governors should look hard at the quality of their planning and self-evaluation, to make sure that they are always ambitious enough in their drive to improve pupils' progress, and rigorous enough in expecting the best from their teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils make expected progress from their starting points, but do not make the rapid progress they need, to have the best possible chance in their future education. This is why pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- Overall, pupils enter the school with average results in the tests taken at the end of infant school, and leave with average results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 6. However, rates of progress vary too much between year groups and between classes within the same year group, and this reflects inconsistency in the quality of the teaching.
- More pupils have been gaining Level 5 in English and in mathematics than was the case at the time of the last inspection, and this is because of generally stronger Year 6 teaching. As a result, the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 is now in line with the national average.
- Pupils attain as well as pupils nationally in reading. Even the weakest readers are able to tackle unfamiliar words. Pupils receive a wide range of reading books at school. Pupils told inspectors that the school encouraged them to read at home as well as at school.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported effectively, so that they quickly catch up and do as well as the other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive support in class and in small withdrawal groups by the team of dedicated teaching assistants and make the progress typically expected of them.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to benefit the pupils concerned, not only through additional learning support, but also through contributing costs to enable these pupils to take advantage of school trips to places of interest.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement, because the quality is inconsistent. Over time, the teaching has not been good enough to promote good achievement.
- In the best lessons, the pace is brisk and pupils are encouraged to begin doing their own research as quickly as possible. However, in many lessons, pupils sit listening to the teacher for lengthy stretches instead of finding things out for themselves.
- Pupils learn best when teachers set work that is matched appropriately to their abilities. For example, pupils in Year 6 receive effective support, which has enabled more of them to achieve at higher levels than at the time of the last inspection.
- Often, however, teachers tend to underestimate what the pupils are capable of doing, and then there is too little challenge in the tasks set, and pupils are not stimulated enough to do their best work. Consequently, their learning slows.
- Teaching assistants provide caring and effective help, enabling pupils with a range of additional needs to keep up with others.
- Teachers' comments in pupils' books have a tendency to describe or praise pupils' work, without providing sufficient guidance on what pupils need to do to improve the quality of their work. As a result, pupils sometimes continue to repeat the same mistakes later in their books.
- The school's marking policy requires teachers to write out correctly three words which pupils have spelled incorrectly in each piece of work they mark, and to ensure that pupils then write and practise the correct spellings. However, this rule is often not followed, and pupils are not given the grounding to enable them to make good spelling habitual.
- The school is cohesive, and its provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are keen to help others, and this was clear from an assembly in which pupils came up with many ideas of how to begin the new year by making a difference, for example by using the school's new polytunnels to grow food which could be sold to benefit

others.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite, considerate and respectful towards adults and one another. They told the inspectors that they felt safe and happy at school, and that they enjoyed their lessons. They confirmed that the good behaviour seen during the inspection was typical.
- Parents and carers reported in discussion with inspectors, and through the online questionnaire, Parent View, and school surveys of their view that they feel that their children are safe and happy at school.
- Inspectors observed good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and there are positive attitudes to learning in the classroom.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying means and of different types of bullying, such as cyber-bullying. They told inspectors that, though there was scarcely any actual bullying, occasionally, pupils fell out with one another. In these instances, the adults sorted things out with fairness and thoroughness, ensuring that all sides were heard.
- Pupils liked the way that the adults and also the school council listened to any concerns they might have. This reflects the school's strong commitment towards developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities, encouraging them to have a good understanding of the world around them, and to respect one another's faiths and cultures. Pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds and heritages get on well with one another.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because teaching and pupils' achievement are not yet good.
- The school's evaluation of its own performance is not always rigorous enough. For example, the school describes pupils' achievement as good, whereas national data, school data and inspectors' observation of pupils' learning and progress over time all point to achievement that is in line with the national average.
- The school's plans for the future, though identifying the right priorities, are not always sufficiently ambitious to raise performance. Plans to improve the quality of teaching, for example, do not identify precisely what needs to be achieved and the timescale for improvements is not urgent enough.
- The school keeps pupils safe and ensures that those who work with them have been properly checked.
- The curriculum provides a sound focus on the key skills of English and mathematics, and this prepares the pupils adequately for their next stage of learning.
- The curriculum provides pupils with enjoyable opportunities to combine their study of history and geography topics with creative writing. Pupils report that they enjoy the clubs, trips and visits to places of interest. They also enjoy the chance to research topics at school and at home through helpful computer links.
- The local authority does not sufficiently challenge the school on its somewhat overgenerous self-evaluation.

The governance of the school:

- The governing body takes an active interest in the school and works supportively with school leaders and staff. It is kept well informed through detailed headteacher's reports about how pupils are doing in comparison to national averages. However, the governing body tends to take on trust the school leaders' somewhat overgenerous view of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. As a result, governors have not held school leaders sufficiently to account for weaker areas of the school's performance. Not all governors know which teachers are on

higher pay scales or understand the procedures involved in ensuring that the best teachers are appropriately rewarded. The governing body minutes provide little evidence of governors asking sufficiently searching questions about the link between teachers' pay and the progress made by pupils. Since pupils' achievement is not good, there is not a close match at present between pupils' outcomes and how well teachers are paid. Governors maintain sound control of the allocation of the school's funds assigned for particular purposes. They fully understand, for example, the uses to which the pupil premium funding is put, and ensure it goes to benefit the pupils it is intended for, such as to subsidise the cost of trips and visits for those who would benefit from the subsidy. Governors attend a range of courses to improve their skills. However, they recognise that they have not yet undertaken a review of their collective skills to improve the quality of their self-evaluation.

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

Unique reference number	102508
Local authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	402824

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debra Kane
Headteacher	Linda Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2011
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