

# Little Thurrock Primary School

Rectory Road, Grays, RM175SW

## Inspection dates

5–6 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	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		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching is not yet consistently good for enough pupils to make good progress across the school.
- Particularly in some Key Stage 1 classes, teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils and do not build on pupils' prior learning to challenge them sufficiently well.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those eligible for pupil-premium funding do not always make as much progress as they should.
- The pace of learning is not always suited to pupils' needs so that sometimes learning slows, especially for more-able pupils.
- The monitoring of teaching by leaders is not consistently rigorous and sometimes does not lead to suitable training for staff.
- Targets in the school's action plans are not always as specific as they need to be, to improve leadership and management in particular.
- The governing body is not as well informed as it should be with regards to teachers' performance and the impact of pupil premium funding on their progress.
- Some parents and carers reported that they would like to be better informed about their child's progress and that communication from the school needs to be more timely.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school has improved teaching in Key Stage 2 so that this is stronger than at the time of the last inspection, especially for the current Year 4 and Year 6.
- Pupils enjoy learning in school and have good opportunities to take part in a wide range of sports and music activities.
- Pupils' interest in reading is well promoted through a range of texts which enhance pupils' writing and cultural development. As a result, pupils' progress in reading is good throughout the school.
- Pupils are welcoming and friendly. Pupils behave in lessons so that learning proceeds without interruption.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 22 lessons in all classes. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- They held informal discussions with parents and carers. They also took account of 73 responses to the Parent View online survey, and 20 questionnaire responses from staff.
- Meetings were held with pupils, leaders at all levels, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons, and separately with senior leaders.
- They heard pupils reading, and observed them in class and around the school.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of school documentation. This included information relating to the attainment and progress of pupils from entry to the school and across key stages; the performance management of staff; records of lesson observations; the school's website; the school's strategic action plans; its self-evaluation; minutes from governing body meetings; behaviour records, and safeguarding information.

## Inspection team

Najoud Ensaff, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Watson

Additional Inspector

David Rosenthal

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Little Thurrock Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few come from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- There are fewer than average disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion supported through school action is also below the national average for primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported through funding for the pupil premium (those eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or with a parent in the armed services) is lower than the national average.
- The school currently meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Raise the proportion of good or better teaching across the school by making sure that:
  - the support provided for pupils with special educational needs and those eligible for pupil-premium funding is always effective so that their rates of progress improve
  - teachers have consistently high expectations so that all pupils, particularly the more able, are challenged in their writing and achieve the highest levels of attainment
  - the pace of learning is always suitable for pupils
  - marking consistently includes guidance for pupils about how to improve and pupils are given time to respond to this
  - good practice is shared with other teachers.
- Raise the effectiveness of leadership and management to good by making sure that:
  - the checks carried out by leaders at all levels on the quality of teaching are consistently rigorous so that they focus on pupils' progress, and always lead to appropriate training for staff
  - targets on the strategic action plan for leadership and management are always specific and easy to measure so that they can be more readily checked
  - the governing body knows more clearly how teachers' performance leads to pay progression and how eligible pupils benefit from pupil-premium funding
  - communication with parents and carers is more timely so that staff respond promptly to their concerns and information is provided to them more quickly.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The school's information on progress does not yet suggest sustained good progress across the school. Progress is not as good in Key Stage 1 classes as it is for pupils in Key Stage 2 and Reception. This is because support provided to pupils with special educational needs is not as precise as it needs to be and the challenge, particularly for more-able pupils, is not always high so that progress for these pupils slows.
- Where the pace of learning is slower, teachers spend too long explaining tasks or organising pupils so that time is wasted. At other times, pupils work for too long on a task without an opportunity to reflect over their learning.
- Children enter Reception with skills and knowledge that broadly match those for children of their age, although their communication and language skills are weaker. Current Year 3 pupils entered Reception with skills that were much lower.
- Not enough pupils make good progress across the school. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with skills that are broadly average and they leave at the end of Year 6 with attainment which is also broadly in line with the national average.
- Although pupils' progress across Key Stage 2 in 2012 was well below average, in 2011 it was well above. Current school information indicates that pupils across Key Stage 2 are making progress in line with others nationally and those in Year 4 and Year 6 are making better progress. Progress across the school in English and mathematics is in line with others in the country although progress in reading is stronger than in writing.
- Although pupils did not perform as well as other pupils nationally in the Year 1 phonics (sounds and letters) check last year, current school information indicates that they are on course to perform in line with others. Standards in reading are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupil-premium funding has been used to provide one-to-one support and additional staffing for eligible pupils. These have not had a consistently good impact so that small number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals do not always make similar gains in attainment (in terms of average point scores) to their peers. In these instances they make a little less progress and are sometimes one term behind their peers. There are no children who are in the care of the local authority or with a parent in the armed services.
- Minority ethnic pupils make similar or better progress than other pupils at the school. Pupils say that they feel well settled and the school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind.
- In a number of Key Stage 2 and Reception lessons progress was good. Here teachers had high expectations, used careful questioning to challenge pupils and built successfully on pupils' prior learning. For example in a lesson in Year 5 pupils were challenged to justify their responses by finding evidence from the text; they predicted outcomes and had good opportunities to discuss their learning in pairs.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good across all key stages and subjects for pupils to make sustained good progress across the school. Teachers do not consistently set work at the right level so that sometimes more-able pupils are not challenged enough and pupils with special educational needs are not supported properly in their learning.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils. The work set is sometimes not as challenging as it could be, particularly in Key Stage 1 classes but sometimes also in Key Stage 2. In addition, work is not always appropriately focused or structured in Key Stage 1 classes.
- While some teachers provide pupils with useful guidance about how to improve, this is not always done, and pupils are rarely given opportunities to respond to this guidance. As a result they do not always make good or enough progress.
- The school has improved the way in which teachers give pupils individual targets so that most pupils are now aware of their targets and the levels they are working.
- There is now some good teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2 and Reception classes. Where teaching is better, teachers set work at the right level and provide a good model for pupils in the way in which they communicate and use vocabulary. They also ask questions to gauge pupils' understanding and provide pupils with useful feedback which guides them in their learning. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson, more-able pupils were given the freedom to find things out for themselves and pupils with special educational needs were provided with additional prompts to support them.
- Opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and groups in lessons are good. These help them to develop good social skills, which are also promoted through the wide range of sports competitions that pupils take part in. Their cultural development is also well promoted through music, studies of literature and visits to places of worship. Their moral and spiritual development is appropriately promoted through assemblies and philosophy lessons.

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

- Most pupils report that they feel safe at school and that behaviour in lessons is typically good. They reported that the few instances of bullying at the school are almost always effectively dealt with and that teachers use the school's behaviour policy to help pupils to behave well.
- The school's records of behaviour indicate that this good behaviour is usual for almost all pupils. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because in lessons where teaching is weaker pupils' attention wavers and they fidget or talk.
- During the inspection, learning almost always proceeded without interruption in lessons. Pupils were welcoming and friendly, treating each other and adults with courtesy and respect.
- Pupils understand how to keep safe and say that they feel safe at school. They know about different forms of bullying such as physical, verbal and racial bullying.
- Almost all parents and carers believe that their children are safe at the school and that pupils behave well. While a notable minority said they did not know how effectively bullying was dealt with, all parents and carers spoken to said it was well dealt with and pupils also said this.
- Attendance for most pupils is above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school.

**The leadership and management requires improvement**

- The strategic plan for leadership and management does not contain specific enough goals to make sure that progress towards targets is easily measured.
- Current checks on teaching by leaders at all levels are not consistently focused on the impact of teachers' work in lessons on pupils' progress. Therefore, appropriate staff training is not always provided.
- While senior leaders at the school evaluate the school's performance accurately they do not provide enough information to the governing body about the progress that pupils eligible for pupil premium funding make and governors are not actively involved in the school's self evaluation, so that the challenge offered by the governors is not yet as strong as it could be.
- The termly progress review meetings that senior leaders conduct with teachers have become more rigorous. Staff are increasingly held to account for pupils' progress and this is beginning to have some impact: progress in reading is now good across the school and the progress that pupils in Year 6 and Year 4 have made since the start of Key Stage 2 is good.
- While the school is beginning to analyse the impact of additional support for pupils with special educational needs this is not yet robust enough to ensure that their progress is good.
- With the support of the local authority, leaders and managers have developed useful plans which have helped them to raise the quality of teaching in some classes, particularly in Key Stage 2 and Reception.
- Subjects and topics are appropriately organised and balanced with pupils reporting that they enjoy what they learn and the opportunities they are given. The strong focus on literature means that pupils develop an early appreciation for this and their reading and cultural skills are well promoted.
- The parents and carers who answered the Parent View survey are generally positive about their experiences with the school. A notable minority of parents and carers both in the survey and on inspection justifiably indicated that the school's communication with them was not always efficient.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has received training to help it support and ask searching questions of the school in some areas of its work. For example, it offers effective challenge in relation to the way the school checks on the impact of additional support given to pupils with special educational needs. The local authority has helped governors to have an improving idea about the quality of teaching in the school and the school's performance in relation to others. However, the governing body is not well enough informed about the impact of pupil-premium funding on pupils' progress or the way in which teachers' performance leads to pay progression. The governing body makes sure that child protection policies and safeguarding meet requirements and that staff and pupils work in a safe environment.

## 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>	114839
<b>Local authority</b>	Thurrock
<b>Inspection number</b>	401471

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	549
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bethan Rew
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liz Jackson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17–18 September 2009
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