

# Thundersley Primary School

Hart Road, Thundersley, Benfleet, SS7 3PT

## Inspection dates

22–23 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Standards are rising rapidly. Pupils are making good progress, often from a low starting point.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do well because their needs are understood and the right support is in place to help them succeed.
- Teaching is good. Regular checking by senior leaders has significantly improved the quality of teaching as well as the progress pupils make.
- Information about how well pupils are doing is being used effectively to help them improve and to plan any further support needed.
- The school uses additional government funding effectively to support a wide range of students in need of extra help. The progress of these pupils is good and many make better progress than pupils in the rest of the school.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe; the social interaction at playtime and around the school is friendly and calm.
- Leadership is good; the headteacher expects high standards from both pupils and teachers. Organisation and teamwork have significantly improved the school.
- The governing body offers effective challenge, drawing on the clear information provided by the senior team.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although progress is good overall, pupils do not achieve equally well in reading, writing and mathematics across all year groups.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding.
- Links with pre-school providers are not yet sufficiently developed to ensure a consistent approach in the way early literacy and numeracy skills are taught.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors conducted 15 lesson observations and reviewed a number of short sessions, seeing every teacher at work. Inspectors conducted four joint observations with senior staff. All staff were offered professional feedback about the lessons inspectors observed.
- Meetings and informal discussions were held with groups of pupils. Further meetings were arranged with the Chair and other members of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, and nominated staff.
- The inspection team looked at the 77 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 22 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents provided by the school, including the school improvement plan, the analysis of pupils' progress, the headteacher's reports to the governing body, the minutes of governing body meetings, and the evidence base from the previous HMI monitoring visit.

## Inspection team

David Jones Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Brenda Watson	Additional Inspector
Matthew Klimcke	Additional Inspector

## Full report

*In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.*

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage is small.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and receiving the pupil premium (additional funding available to the school to assist particular pupils) is below average.
- The proportion of the pupils who need extra help with their learning because they are disabled or have special educational needs is below average. These include pupils supported at school action, school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- HMI visited the school in January 2013 to monitor its progress since the last inspection, which determined that the school required significant improvement.

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

- Improve the consistency of pupils' progress in reading and writing and mathematics by:
  - further developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills
  - making sure that pupils understand their number facts, the method to be used in calculations and the mathematical language they use.
- Embed the good teaching recently secured by identifying the individual strengths of teaching staff and sharing this good practice to strive for outstanding teaching.
- Strengthen links with the local pre-school providers to bring consistency of approach to the pupils' early literacy and numeracy experiences.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- When pupils start school, their attainment is often below average. Achievement is good because effective teaching has helped pupils to make good progress.
- The results of the 2012 Year 1 screening for early reading skills were below average, although school data indicates the 2013 figures are likely to be higher. Inspectors heard pupils in every year group read and this showed that pupils were at the level expected for their age and ability. The results of the 2012 Key Stage 1 teacher assessments were above the national average. Inspectors reviewed the school's current data, which indicates rising standards, and found this to be supported by the quality of the work in the pupils' books.
- Standards in Key Stage 2 have varied in recent years. However, the positive effect of good teaching was clear in a scrutiny of the pupils' books conducted by HMI. Standards are rising in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have a statement of special educational need often make outstanding progress because of the quality of teaching, the early identification of need and the individual support provided. Provision for those who find learning difficult is well organised and reviewed termly.
- Similarly, those pupils in need of extra help and those in the care of the local authority make good and sometimes outstanding progress. The school has taken part in national project supported by Dyslexia Action that provides assessment and tuition for a small group of children who have specific learning difficulties; these vulnerable pupils have made good progress.
- The progress of pupils supported by additional government funds (the pupil premium) matches or exceeds the good progress made by other pupils. Those who have received individualised support during the last year progressed more rapidly than the rest of the school, making a year's progress in English and mathematics in two terms. This has narrowed what has, in the past, been a wide attainment gap. In 2012, pupils eligible for the pupil premium were four terms behind their classmates in English and nearly five terms behind in mathematics.
- The small number of pupils with minority ethnic backgrounds also make good progress and the school ensures that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Although pupils make good progress overall, some inconsistencies remain between the pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills within year groups. Not all pupils understand mathematical terms and the best methods to be used in calculations.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Teaching has improved significantly since the HMI monitoring visit in January 2013, when two thirds of the lessons observed were good or better. During this inspection, all lessons seen were good and this matched the detailed records maintained by the school.
- Lessons are well organised and ensure that pupils are involved in their own learning. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn. Teachers understand what they need to do to help pupils to improve.

- In the small-group and individual support sessions, staff listen carefully to the pupils' ideas and question effectively to improve learning. This use of calm, precise coaching is enabling pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills to improve as they move through the school.
- Marking is consistent and pupils respond positively to the teachers' comments. However, English marking provided more guidance than that in mathematics books, where worked examples of the method to be employed were not always evident.
- Staff question well and focus on developing the pupils' use of higher-level vocabulary. Nevertheless, opportunities are sometimes missed to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- In some lessons, teachers do not allow enough time to review pupils' work at the end or they miss opportunities to develop outstanding learning. Similarly, in a number of lessons where pupils made good progress, opportunities to redirect questions or utilise strong pupil contribution as a point of discussion were sometimes missed due to the pressure of time.

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

- Pupils were keen to engage inspectors in conversation when out of the classroom and spoke proudly about their school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are pleased to come to school in the morning and run into class from the front gate. They look after each other during play time and say that 'playground buddies' are kind and thoughtful.
- Pupils work cooperatively in class and many show good social skills. They told inspectors there was little name-calling and they feel safe in school because supervision is good and they can trust staff to sort out any problems quickly.
- Pupils enjoy learning; they take care over their work and often work intently. Talk partner discussion, where pupils share their ideas together, is brisk and happy.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They understand different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and racism. Nine out of ten parents or carers who contributed comments to Parent View noted their child was happy and well looked after.
- Attendance has risen significantly in the last year and is currently in line with the national average. There have been no exclusions for the last two years.
- Staff supervision is low-key, although well distributed.

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

- The headteacher has worked relentlessly to improve both teaching and achievement. The leadership team are uncompromising in making sure that all pupils in the school receive a good education but acknowledge that more needs to be done to further raise standards and improve pupil progress.

- Teaching has improved rapidly since the previous inspection because leaders carefully check how well teachers are helping pupils to make progress. The school ensures that performance management decisions about contracts of employment and teachers' pay are closely linked to the effectiveness of their teaching and the roles they fulfil.
- The school has used staff development opportunities effectively to help teachers and classroom assistants to improve their practice and increase the progress pupils make.
- The senior team has contributed to bid for a local Teaching Alliance which is being submitted by Kingston Primary School and Glenwood Special School to the Department for Education.
- Senior staff consistently share their high expectations of teaching and learning with other staff, and this has been a key factor in the improvement in teaching. They make accurate judgements of teaching quality and relate these judgements directly to how well teachers are helping pupils to improve. All staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire were positive about the quality of leadership and management.
- School leaders have worked successfully to reduce pupil absence and their consistent checking has led to a significant rise in attendance.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities provided within lessons and assemblies are well documented around the school.
- The local authority has provided a useful range of support that has been well managed by the school. The school has drawn support from its membership of the local BATIC Trust (an education charitable trust).
- There are links with pre-school providers but these have yet to result in the development of a consistent approach to the teaching of early literacy and numeracy skills so that children get off to a faster start when they join Thundersley.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are well trained and fully informed about the school's performance. Data and other information provided in reports from the headteacher is used effectively to compare performance with other schools. Governors make regular visits to the school and understand where teaching is most effective. They check the impact of senior staff reviews of teaching and ensure that teachers' progress through the pay scales is related to their effectiveness in raising standards. Governors set targets for the headteacher and check carefully how well these are being met. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is being spent and closely monitor the impact of this and all other spending to ensure that the school's budget is being used efficiently to help pupils make better progress. The governing body ensures that requirements for the safeguarding of pupils are met.

## 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>	135154
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	408837

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

<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<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>	359
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Harrod
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emma Dawson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 April 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 793251
<b>Fax number</b>	01268 794277
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