

Northolmes Junior School

Leith View Road, Horsham, RH12 4ET

Inspection dates 13–14 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although now beginning to rise, standards had dipped in recent years. Pupils' progress across the school has been inconsistent, particularly for girls. Not enough pupils are making accelerated progress.
- The quality of teaching has been inconsistent. There is not yet enough consistently good teaching. Teachers do not always provide sufficient challenge in lessons.
- Assessment practice is inconsistent. Teachers' marking does not always identify the most important areas for improvement.
- Evaluation of the deployment and impact of pupil premium funding has not been rigorous enough.
- School leaders do not always rigorously evaluate the impact of initiatives they have undertaken.
- Communication between senior leaders and the governing body could be improved. Governors are not sufficiently involved in the school's development planning process.

The school has the following strengths:

- Provision and outcomes in reading have improved in the current year.
- More effective analysis of school data now provides school leaders and teachers with a clearer view of pupils' progress.
- More effective use of performance management procedures and better professional development opportunities are contributing to improvements in teaching.
- The support for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs has been reorganised so that these pupils are now making better progress.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy school and say that they feel safe.
- School self-evaluation is accurate.
- Governors bring breadth of experience to their roles, although their expertise could be used more effectively.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which four were seen together with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and Vice-Chair, the school's leaders, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), together with another survey carried out by the school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including records of school checks on the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan, and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and pupils' progress. They also looked closely at pupils' written work and listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Penny Orme

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Northolmes Junior School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are predominantly White British, with only a few pupils from other ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action has reduced recently and is now broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those from forces families) is slightly below the national average. There are, currently, no pupils from forces families on roll.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The number of pupils on roll has fallen steadily over several years, reflecting population changes locally. This has had an impact upon the number and organisation of classes. Currently, two of the five classes include pupils from more than one year group.
- The school offers breakfast, after-school and holiday clubs. These are all managed and inspected separately and did not form part of the current inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that a higher proportion is good or outstanding, by:
 - ensuring that teachers have a greater understanding of, and are more responsive to, pupils' progress data
 - establishing greater consistency of assessment practice, particularly in relation to the marking of pupils' work and the identification of the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Ensure that pupils make consistently good achievement across the school, particularly girls and those pupils currently in Year 5, so that standards in English and mathematics are raised to be above average by the end of Year 6, by:
 - rigorous tracking of pupils' progress, particularly of those in receipt of pupil premium funding, to check they make at least the amount of progress expected each year and that increasing numbers make more
 - planning consistently challenging tasks so that all pupils make rapid progress.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management further by ensuring that:
 - the evaluation of the impact of initiatives undertaken, including the deployment of pupil premium funding, is more rigorous
 - governors are more closely involved in school's development planning and the monitoring of progress made
 - communication between school leaders and the governing body is more open and productive.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment declined following the last inspection. While attainment by the end of Year 6 is rising again, it remains broadly average overall. The school links the dip in standards to a period of instability in staffing and some weaknesses in teaching. Some recent year-groups have also had higher than usual proportions of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils join Year 3 at broadly average entry levels. Currently, across the school, most pupils are working at levels appropriate to their age.
- Despite evidence of recovery, achievement requires improvement. Progress in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6, particularly for girls, and for pupils in Year 5, has been inconsistent in the last three years. Girls' progress and attainment have, over time, compared unfavourably with that of the boys. Greater staff awareness of this issue, a more strategic approach within lessons and more consistent teaching are now driving modest improvements. There is little variation, for example, in the achievement of boys and girls currently in Year 3.
- Progress in reading has improved. Effective external support and the introduction of a programme to support pupils' understanding of the links between letters and sounds (phonics) have facilitated a good improvement in reading standards. With better subject leadership, the monitoring of progress has also improved.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is inconsistent. In 2012, these pupils made less rapid progress than the others. However, in the last two terms, the needs of all identified pupils, and the range and effectiveness of all interventions, have been rigorously audited. The coordinator is now evaluating the impact of all interventions. More-effective targeting of resources is beginning to accelerate the progress of these pupils.
- In 2012, the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium in Year 6 was in line with that of other pupils in English and mathematics. The school has used the additional funding to provide individual tuition and access to counselling and support, and this is enabling targeted pupils to catch up. Progress is not, however, consistently strong across the school because, until recently, the monitoring of the impact of support has not been sufficiently rigorous.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of what pupils should achieve. While there is some good teaching, not all teachers provide sufficient challenge to ensure pupils make progress at accelerated rates. Better analysis of pupil performance data is now providing teachers with information on pupils' learning, but this is just beginning to have an impact on daily practice.
- The school recognises that staff changes and the challenge of mixed-year classes have contributed to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. However, external support, advice and training opportunities are underpinning emerging improvements in pupils' learning.
- In a very successful physical education lesson for Year 3 and 4 pupils, delivered with flair, pupils were working enthusiastically and creatively on the apparatus, demonstrating ways in which they could twist at different levels and heights, and in varied groupings. The activities were challenging, pupils were able to take risks and showed innovation in their movements. As a result, learning had a rapid pace, with the teacher building effectively upon pupils' enthusiasm.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs learn at a similar pace to others in the school. Recent reorganisation of the provision made to support these pupils is, however, beginning to drive more rapid progress. Support staff are increasingly deployed in line with their individual skills.
- There has been some improvement in teachers' checking and assessment of pupils' progress, although practice remains inconsistent. Not all pupils have individual targets in English and

mathematics, nor do they routinely evaluate the quality of their work, identifying areas for improvement. Teachers' marking only occasionally guides pupils as to the next steps in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school. They are respectful towards adults and value each other. Some pupils do not respond well to less-effective teaching and make less progress than expected in those lessons.
- The school has effective procedures to tackle occasional instances of poor behaviour. Staff generally manage behaviour well. There have been a few exclusions recently. Racist incidents are rare. The majority of parents and carers who expressed a view feel that behaviour is good.
- Pupils have few concerns about their safety or security. They feel that behaviour has improved considerably this year. They are confident that adults will respond to their worries, so that issues are resolved promptly.
- Pupils understand that bullying may take different forms, but feel that it is not part of their experience. Recorded instances of bullying are few. 'Anti-bullying week' contributes well to pupils' awareness. Relationships are positive and supportive. The role of 'peer mediator' has been reintroduced recently, to support harmonious play outdoors.
- The school ensures that pupils are alert to potential risks and they have a good awareness of the risks relating, for example, to substance misuse and to social networking sites.
- Attendance is above average. Most pupils arrive punctually.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although school self-evaluation is accurate, there is insufficient involvement of stakeholders other than senior leaders in devising the school development plan. In addition, evaluation of the impact of initiatives undertaken is not sufficiently rigorous.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic and keen to improve pupils' learning, although they have limited time to develop a good understanding of pupils' progress in classes.
- School leaders have recognised the need to tackle underlying weaknesses in teaching and have identified the correct priorities for action. Actions taken are beginning to bring about the necessary improvements in teaching and achievement.
- The analysis of data has improved. Until recently, the evaluation of information has not been sufficiently incisive, so that there has been excessive delay before leaders identified or tackled slow progress in particular subjects or year groups. That said, the monitoring of the impact of pupil premium funding is not yet sufficiently analytical.
- The headteacher has established more-effective systems for monitoring the school's work. Sharper targets are now provided for the improvement of teaching, with better opportunities for professional development. Pupils' learning, particularly in reading, is beginning to improve.
- The school has, until recently, received basic support from its local authority. This has increased in the last two terms, with beneficial impact.
- The school has endeavoured to maintain a broad curriculum and there is some work of good quality in pupils' topic books and in school displays. Work is generally neatly presented. At present, science, and information and communication technology, have the potential for further development. A good range of out-of-school activities, particularly in specialist music provision, adds to pupils' enjoyment of their work.
- Provision for pupils' social and moral development is good overall. Spiritual development is supported through church links. Pupils experience other cultures through the curriculum. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to build awareness of the cultural diversity of the

United Kingdom.

- Links with parents and carers are generally good. The school successfully targets 'hard-to-reach' parents and carers, so benefiting pupils' learning.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance has improved. Many governors are new, but have considerable expertise to offer. They undertake regular training and understand their role well. They are rigorous in their scrutiny of the management of the school. Governors now have a good knowledge of the school's effectiveness and they are increasingly confident in evaluating information relating to the quality of teaching and its impact upon pupils' performance, comparing outcomes to national performance data. However, they feel that communication between themselves and the senior leaders could be more open and effective. As at the last inspection, they are given little involvement in developing or evaluating the school development plan. Governors recognise the need to ensure equality of opportunity, to tackle discrimination and to foster good relationships. They are keen to ensure that pay and promotion are firmly linked to teachers' effectiveness. However, they recognise that, because of past decisions, teachers currently paid on higher scales are not necessarily the most effective. Otherwise, they manage the budget well and evaluate decisions about the use of pupil premium funding to close gaps in pupils' achievement on the basis of the information they receive. Governors ensure, along with senior leaders, that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements.
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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	125836
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	412287

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dagmar Bowers
Headteacher	Sandra Ashby
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2010
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