

Northmead Junior School

Grange Road, Guildford, GU2 9ZA

Inspection dates 27–28 March 2014

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		Requires improvement	3
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:

- By the end of Key Stage 2, too few pupils attain as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons are not always good enough. There are too many instances of low-level disruption when pupils do not concentrate well enough on their learning.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good because it has not ensured that pupils make good enough progress or achieve well over time, though there is improvement.
- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils remain focused on their learning.
- Pupils do not always receive sufficient advice about how to improve their handwriting.

The school has the following strengths:

- The headteacher, supported by other senior leaders and governors, has ensured that the school has a much stronger emphasis on pupils making rapid progress across the school. Teaching is improving strongly as a result.
- The school's leadership team has been strengthened as a result of recent well-judged appointments. Staff new to leadership positions are effective and have supported the senior leadership team's drive towards improving the school.
- The school keeps pupils safe and looks after them well.
- Strongly improved teaching has led to current pupils in all year groups making more rapid progress this academic year.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the deputy Headteacher and one with the Headteacher. Teaching in every class and in the Speech, Language and Communication Centre was observed. Inspectors also observed an assembly, and pupils' behaviour in the playground and at lunchtime.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher and other members of staff.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including support for pupils who need extra help. They heard pupils read and examined pupils' work in their exercise books and on wall displays.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including plans for what pupils will learn in each subject and for the school's future development, as well as the use of the primary school sports funding and pupil premium funding. The inspectors also considered documentation concerned with arrangements for keeping pupils safe, attendance records, minutes of governing body meetings, and records of how pupils' learning is tracked and of how the quality of teaching is checked.
- Inspectors took account of the 60 responses to the online survey (Parent View), four letters that were received from parents and carers, and held discussions with a sample of parents and carers.
- Inspectors also considered the questionnaire responses completed by 35 staff members.

Inspection team

Steven Popper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Victoria Turner

Additional Inspector

Ann Longfield

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized junior school. It includes specially resourced provision in the form of a Speech, Language and Communication Centre, which has 13 pupils aged between seven and 11 currently on roll.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is slightly higher than the national average. This extra money is provided for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and children with a parent or carer in the armed services. There are three pupils in local authority care currently on roll. The proportion of pupils with a parent or carer in the armed forces is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is lower than average, while the proportion supported through school action plus is above average. There are 16 pupils with a statement of special educational needs currently on roll, including all those who attend the Speech, Language and Communication Centre.
- A large majority of pupils are of White British heritage, and others represent a range of different ethnic backgrounds.
- The number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is lower than in most other schools.
- The assessment leader took up his responsibilities in September 2013, and the leader responsible for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs took up her responsibilities in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is good or better by:
 - making certain that teachers consistently keep all pupils focused on their learning
 - making sure that pupils receive clear advice about how to improve their handwriting.
- Ensure that much greater proportions of pupils reach higher levels of attainment in reading, and especially in writing and mathematics, by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Improve pupils' attitudes to learning by eliminating low-level disruption during lessons, and ensuring that pupils maintain the focus on their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because too few pupils attain as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' results in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 improved in 2013, though they are still too low, but results in mathematics declined. Pupils' results in reading showed some decline also. However, most groups of pupils currently in the school are on track to reach higher standards than pupils in previous years.
- In recent years, pupils did not make rapid enough progress, especially in writing and mathematics. However, all groups of pupils currently in the school, including the most able, now make rapid progress. This is because of strong improvements to teaching and an increase in the level of challenge offered to pupils.
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding make slower progress than non-eligible pupils. The gap between pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and other pupils is being closed successfully by the school. The gap in attainment in 2013 was between one and two terms in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. This is a much narrower gap than in previous years.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those supported by the Speech, Language and Communication Centre, make rapid progress from their starting points. This is because the work and support they are given closely match their needs.
- A very large majority of parents and carers who took part in the survey thought that their children made good progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement as it has not ensured that pupils make consistently good progress in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good. Teachers do not always check that pupils remain focused on their learning, with the result that some pupils do not concentrate sufficiently and use time poorly.
- Teachers do not always give pupils effective advice about how to improve their handwriting. As a result, pupils do not consistently present their work neatly.
- However, teaching is now improving strongly, and teachers' expectations of learning are higher than they have been in the past. A particular improvement has been the higher level of challenge now offered to pupils, including the most able, across the school. As a result, all groups of pupils currently in the school are making more rapid progress.
- Improvements to the way teachers question pupils now ensure pupils have to respond with clear explanations that deepen their learning and prevent misconceptions. For instance, pupils are expected to explain their thinking rather than just offer suggestions, and teachers check their understanding frequently.
- Good use of resources rooted in improvements to planning helps pupils to clarify their understanding. For example, pupils use mathematical resources to check their predictions and calculations.
- Teachers in the Speech, Language and Communication Centre observe and respond to pupils' needs carefully. They give pupils support that is well matched to their needs. This ensures that pupils supported by the centre make rapid progress.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well and support learning effectively. They communicate clearly to the pupils with whom they work and ensure that they understand their learning.
- A very large majority of parents and carers who offered an opinion considered that their children were taught well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' attitudes to learning are not always good enough. There are too many instances of low-level disruption when pupils do not concentrate sufficiently on their learning. Pupils do not always listen as well as they might or move sensibly from one activity to another.
- However, pupils' behaviour towards each other in the playground, during lunchtime and when they move around the school is good. They play happily together and are friendly towards each other.
- The school manages pupils' behaviour well and teaches them how to make sensible choices. Pupils say that there is no bullying, just 'friendship problems' which occasionally happen. Pupils talk positively about the school's 'worry box' that allows them to express any concerns. They also say adults listen to any worries that they raise.
- A few parents and carers raised concerns about behaviour and bullying, but there is little evidence to substantiate these concerns. The school's records of incidents of poor behaviour show that members of staff have responded effectively. The inspectors saw evidence of the school's success in improving the behaviour of particular pupils.
- Attendance has improved and is now higher than in most other schools. This is because of the school's good relationships with parents and carers and successful home-school links, and because pupils enjoy coming to school. The school's provision of a breakfast club has improved attendance and punctuality.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Adults provide good supervision at playtimes and lunchtimes. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when online, when swimming and when using the road. Pupils say that they feel safe at school. One pupil said, 'Teachers are always keeping an eye on us.'
- A large majority of parents and carers who took part in the online survey thought that the school dealt effectively with bullying and that behaviour in the school was well managed, and inspectors agree.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher, other senior leaders and governors have high aspirations for the school and high expectations of teachers and of pupils' progress, which they have successfully embedded in the school this year. Expectations have substantially increased because of the headteacher's much stronger focus on ensuring that more pupils make the fastest progress possible. Teaching and pupils' progress have both strongly improved as a result. This is why leadership and management are good.
- However, these strong expectations have not yet resulted in pupils attaining high enough results at the end of Key Stage 2, or in enough pupils making good progress over time.
- The school's leadership team has been strengthened by recent well-judged appointments, with the result that the school is in a good position to improve further. The new leader responsible for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has ensured that these pupils are given the support that they need. This has resulted in their rapid progress this academic year.
- The new assessment leader has been highly effective in strengthening the way in which the leadership team and teachers use information about pupils' performance to set targets for individual pupils' progress. This work has contributed to the school's higher expectations and the faster progress made by pupils.
- The school has accurately identified where it needs to improve. The school's plan for bringing about improvements is well judged and contains a clear timescale for improvements to be made.
- Leaders carefully monitor the quality of teaching and teachers are expected to perform well and produce good progress and results. Performance management arrangements are robust and ensure that strong performance is rewarded appropriately and that any weaker performance is

quickly addressed. Leaders use their monitoring of teaching to set teachers challenging targets for their improvement and to identify and meet their training needs.

- Subject leaders are preparing the school well for the implementation of the new National Curriculum. The school teaches a broad range of subjects, including French and swimming, and pupils find topics such as the Aztecs vibrant and interesting. Pupils are taken on a wide range of visits, for example, to theatre productions, a zoo laboratory and the British Museum. These experiences broaden pupils' minds well and help develop their sense of aspiration.
- There are good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils engage in much creative work, including ceramics, music and drama workshops. The school also actively works against discrimination and promotes equality, for example through its inclusive ethos and its teaching of personal, social and health education. A wide selection of clubs provides creative and sporting opportunities in which pupils' participation has increased.
- The primary school sports funding is spent effectively on enhancing pupils' engagement in sports through the provision of a range of clubs and competitive events with other schools. The funding is also spent well to improve teachers' sports skills and knowledge.
- The pupil premium funding is also spent effectively, for example, to provide teaching assistants offering extra support in English and mathematics for eligible pupils. These measures have contributed to their good progress, and the narrowing of the gap between eligible and non-eligible pupils.
- The school ensures that all pupils are safe. It keeps appropriate and up-to-date records of its work in this area and meets statutory requirements.
- The local authority has given the school much support, and contributed strongly to the higher expectations this year. It has given effective training to governors and teachers and helped monitor the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- A very large majority of parents and carers considered the school to be well led.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Under the guidance of a new Chair of the Governing Body, the governing body has become much more effective this academic year. It is now very well organised and specific governors monitor particular aspects of the school's provision. Governors understand the information about pupils' achievement and use this understanding to offer systematic challenge of high quality to the school. Governors scrutinise information about the quality of teaching and check that performance management procedures properly hold teachers and leaders to account. They also make certain that teachers are given the support they need to improve, and that strong performance is appropriately rewarded. Governors scrutinise school finances carefully, including the use and impact of pupil premium and primary school sports funding. Their impact on the school's drive for improvement is good.

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	125294
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	441055

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	363
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Trevor Grant
Headteacher	Debbie Brown
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 March 2011
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