

Northolmes Junior School

Leith View Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 4ET

Inspection dates

7–8 October 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few make good progress.
- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. Teachers do not all make enough use of assessment information. The work they give to pupils is too easy. Although teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, they do not all ensure that pupils learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers do not all challenge pupils by asking probing questions that deepen their understanding.
- Not all pupils have secure basic skills in handwriting, spelling and punctuation. They do not always present their work as neatly as they should.
- New leaders who are responsible for the work of upper and lower school have not yet improved standards. They do not yet ensure that teachers plan effectively for the different abilities and ages in classes.
- Subject leaders do not check pupils' work thoroughly to ensure that pupils are making enough progress. They have not tackled weaknesses in writing or the lack of problem solving in mathematics.
- New school leaders and governors have taken action to raise pupils' achievement but have not had time to bring about the rapid improvements required.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders and governors have an accurate picture of the school's performance. They work closely together and have established clear and appropriate priorities for improvement.
- Pupils use their literacy and mathematical skills well when learning other subjects. Their speaking and listening skills are good.
- The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is closing rapidly. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- The curriculum contains topics that interest pupils. It is enriched with a good range of additional activities that contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils enjoy school. They feel happy and safe, which is reflected in their good attendance. They behave well both in and out of lessons and they have positive attitudes to school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that teachers:
 - use assessment information to plan work that builds on what pupils already know and can do
 - ensure that pupils respond to marking by correcting and improving their own work
 - ask questions that probe pupils' understanding and deepen their learning.
- Increase the proportion of pupils who make better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that pupils write neatly and legibly, and that they spell and punctuate their work accurately
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills to solve complicated written problems
 - providing more challenging work for pupils.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders responsible for upper and lower school check that all groups of pupils make good progress and take actions to improve teaching when this is not the case
 - subject leaders check the progress of pupils in their areas of responsibility and provide clear guidance to teachers about how to improve.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership requires improvement because leaders have not ensured that all pupils receive good-quality teaching. Leaders have implemented a planned programme of training to improve teachers' skills. However, owing to staff changes, it is too soon to see the impact of this work. Consequently pupils' outcomes are not yet consistently good.
- The leadership team has recently been restructured to include the posts of team leaders for the upper school and lower school. Both leaders are enthusiastic but have not yet secured a thorough overview of the performance within their teams. In particular, they have not checked the progress made by pupils well enough, so have not taken actions to address pupils' underachievement.
- Subject leaders have had recent training from local authority advisers and are now well prepared for their role. They visit classrooms, check teachers' planning and look at work in pupils' books. However, they do not make enough use of all available information to give them a clear understanding of what precisely needs to be done to improve teaching in their subjects.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils have enough opportunities to solve problems in mathematics. There is not enough emphasis on ensuring that pupils produce written work of high quality, and this slows their progress. In other respects, the curriculum is well planned and enhanced with a wide range of extra activities that add to pupils' interest and enjoyment. Subjects such as history and geography are woven together to give pupils a broader understanding of the world around them. Pupils thoroughly enjoy music and many are learning to play a musical instrument.
- There have been significant changes to the school in the last two years. Since the previous inspection, governors took the strategic decision to federate the school with a neighbouring infant school. The headteacher of that infant school was appointed headteacher of the federation. The governing body was reconstituted and took over leadership of the school with effect from September 2014. School leaders and governors have established a good working partnership and are well placed to bring about the improvements required.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school a year ago. Three new teachers have joined the school and the leadership team has been reviewed. Leaders have created a stable team of teachers who are enthusiastic and share their ambitions. Staff morale has improved and is high.
- School leaders have a clear understanding of what needs to be done. They know that pupils make insufficient progress and that the quality of teaching requires improvement. They have a clear plan of action that has been created in consultation with all stakeholders. This plan is ambitious and reflects the high expectations of school leaders.
- Leaders have successfully brought about improvements since the previous inspection but know that more needs to be done to raise pupils' achievement. There are new systems to record and track pupils' progress. This has enabled leaders to identify those pupils who are at risk of underachieving. This reflects leaders' aspirations that all pupils are treated fairly and have equal opportunities to succeed.
- Current leaders introduced arrangements to review the work of all staff and to set targets for their performance. All staff now have targets and they are fully aware that they are accountable for pupils' progress. They now have to produce clear evidence to show that they have demonstrated the necessary standards to secure progression on the salary scale.
- Leaders acted quickly to review the way in which the pupil premium funding was spent. They now target those pupils who may need more help in the classroom as well as those who need support to attend school visits and clubs. Consequently, these pupils are growing in confidence and learning well. The previous gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is closing rapidly.
- British values such as tolerance and respect for others are promoted effectively through the study of topics. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are studying modern Egypt and they reflect on the similarities and differences between themselves and those from other parts of the world. They are encouraged to reflect on wider issues such as the beliefs of those from other faith groups. This helps to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The use of additional funds such as the primary sports funding has been reviewed and is now more effective. Staff are trained to provide high-quality sports education, including dance and outdoor games. A trained coach provides additional activities for pupils at lunchtime. Consequently, pupils enjoy a wide range of physical activities that keep them fit and healthy.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are given high priority by leaders and governors. All training is up to

date and staff know what action to take should there be concerns about any aspect of pupils' health, safety and welfare. The school works in close cooperation with families, particularly those whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable.

- Parents and staff who responded to the survey believe that the school is well led and managed.
- **The governance of the school**
 - An experienced and effective chair leads the new governing body. Since federating, governors have strengthened relationships with other school leaders and work with them in close partnership to achieve the school's ambitions. Governors took decisive action to secure strong leadership. They now provide a good balance of support and challenge to the school. Governors have a clear understanding of performance information and they know that pupils are not doing as well as they should. They support school leaders' actions to improve teaching and only award pay increases when they are confident that teachers have met their performance targets. Governors visit frequently both formally and informally to check that information provided by the school is accurate. They work closely with school leaders to evaluate the quality of provision and to set priorities for improving. Governors have a good balance of professional skills that they use effectively to challenge school leaders and hold them to account.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. This is because some teachers do not use assessment information to plan work that is at the right level for all pupils. Often the work is too easy or pupils have covered similar work in a previous class and there is too little challenge for pupils. Not all teachers insist that pupils' writing is of a good standard and this slows pupils' progress.
- Work in pupils' books shows that teachers' marking is thorough and detailed. Teachers provide extensive comments telling pupils how well they have done and how their work can be improved. However, particularly in writing, teachers do not ensure that pupils respond to these comments by correcting and improving their work, so pupils repeat the same mistakes.
- Although most teachers produce detailed plans to support their lessons, they are not all clear about what pupils already know and what they expect pupils to learn. As a result, lessons do not always build on and extend previous learning and this slows pupils' progress. Although teachers ask pupils questions, they do not probe pupils deeply enough to extend and develop their understanding and this slows pupils' progress.
- Teachers use resources, including information technology (IT), to help pupils to learn. This engages pupils' interest and helps them to understand what they are learning. There are occasions when pupils themselves use IT to record their work. For example, pupils in a Year 5/6 class created an information text using boxes, captions and illustrations to describe life in Egypt.
- The role of teaching assistants has been developed and they provide good-quality support, both to pupils and teachers, in lessons. They help by checking that pupils understand what they are to do and by providing additional guidance to help them to succeed. This increases pupils' confidence and helps disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make good progress.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Teachers are enthusiastic, so pupils behave well and enjoy taking part and responding to teachers' questions. In some classes, there is a high level of challenge where pupils have to apply their understanding; for example, they used angles to solve tricky problems. However, this is not consistent across the school.
- One of the strengths of the school is the way in which pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills when learning other subjects. For example, in a Year 5/6 class, pupils used IT and books to research aspects of modern Egypt in preparation for writing an information text. This helped them to practise and improve their skills within a purposeful activity.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. This aspect of the school's work is given high priority so that all pupils develop confidence, resilience and independence. Although pupils have positive attitudes to school, they do not always present their work to the highest possible standard.
- The school provides good support for those pupils whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable. This helps them to settle quickly and take part in all aspects of school life with confidence. All pupils are treated fairly and equally and discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated.
- Pupils understand how to keep safe. They have been taught about external dangers such as those related to roads, water and tobacco. They know that some non-medicinal drugs can be dangerous. They are very aware of the potential dangers when using modern technology and that they should never reveal personal information when using the internet.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and that adults are always around to support them and respond to their concerns. They enjoy school and this is reflected in their attendance, which is above average.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including that related to technology, but say it rarely happens. Occasionally, if disagreements do happen, adults are on hand to help.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in class and when moving around the school. Just occasionally, when the work is too easy, they exhibit 'off task' behaviour and start to chat among themselves.
- Pupils are happy and they enjoy school. This is reflected in their above-average attendance. There have been very few reported incidents of poor behaviour and very few exclusions in recent years.
- Pupils are friendly, kind and helpful. They get on well together regardless of background. They respect one another and listen carefully, showing that the school promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school environment is calm and orderly and there are plenty of activities available for pupils at breaktimes. At lunchtime, pupils eat sensibly and sociably and enjoy meals that keep them fit and healthy.
- Parents, staff and governors agree that pupils behave well and that they are happy and safe at school.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Although pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education, their outcomes require improvement. This is because they do not make enough progress in reading, writing or mathematics. By the end of Year 6, their attainment is broadly average and too few have made good progress.
- Pupils do not write as well as they should. This is because they do not have a sufficient grasp of spelling, handwriting and punctuation and so they are unable to write neatly, fluently and at length.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of number. They accurately complete calculations involving fractions and decimals. However, work in pupils' current books shows that there are too few occasions when pupils use these skills to solve complicated word problems. This prevents them from developing fluency and confidence when confronted with new concepts.
- In some classes, the most-able pupils are given work that challenges and stretches them. However, in too many classes, the level of work they are provided with is too easy and consequently they do not all progress as well as they should. Just occasionally, they repeat work that they have already completed in their previous class.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs now make good progress. This is because leaders have reorganised provision for these pupils. Sometimes trained teaching assistants give them additional help in class. At other times they have special programmes of work to help them overcome their difficulties. Their progress is carefully tracked so staff can check that they are being given the correct help and support.
- One of the successes of the school is that the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other

pupils is closing rapidly. This is because the achievement of these pupils is given high priority by leaders and governors. Owing to concerns about the past achievement of disadvantaged pupils, current leaders restructured the way in which funds were spent so that they are now targeted more closely at tackling individual pupils' weaknesses.

- Pupils speak clearly and fluently and have a wide vocabulary to express their ideas, thoughts and feelings. They listen carefully to each other and to adults and show respect and understanding towards the views of others.
- Pupils enjoy reading and happily discuss favourite authors and books. By Year 6, they read fluently and confidently although they do not always respond correctly to punctuation and this can interfere with their understanding. More confident readers relate events from the selected text to modern-day events. They show sensitivity and compassion as they reflect on the way in which some groups of people are treated in the world today.

School details

Unique reference number	125836
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10005775

This inspection 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	151
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Oakley
Headteacher	Sylvia White
Telephone number	01403 261822
Website	www.northolmes.w-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	office@northolmes.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools and pupils are taught in mixed age classes.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is average. This is additional funding provided by the government to support those pupils who, in this school, are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs is above average.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has federated with Littlehaven Infant School. The headteacher of that school now leads both schools together with a new governing body. A new deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2014 and three new teachers have joined the school in the past year. A new leadership structure was put into place in September 2015.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is an after-school club and a breakfast club on site. These are run by a separate provider and were not part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils working in seven lessons or parts of lessons, all of which were jointly observed with school leaders. She looked at work in pupils' books and she listened to a group of pupils from Year 6 reading. She attended one assembly.
- Pupils were observed in class, in the playground and as they moved around school.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, three governors, including the chair of governors, and teachers. The inspector also met with teaching assistants, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- Among the documents scrutinised were school improvement plans, information relating to pupils' learning and progress, and various policies including those relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.
- The views of parents were taken into account by analysing the 44 responses to the online survey, Parent View. The inspector considered the views of staff by analysing the 15 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Joy Considine, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015

