

Nelson Primary School

Nelson Road, Whitton, Twickenham, Middlesex TW2 7BU

Inspection dates

19–20 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils do not achieve well enough in English and mathematics throughout the school.
- Pupils' writing is particularly weak.
- The school does not know how well pupils do in the other subjects beyond English and mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are not high enough.
- Senior leaders evaluate the school much too highly. They know about many of its weaknesses but underestimate the importance of these.
- The governing body and academy trust do not challenge the school to improve. They accept much too readily the consistently overgenerous reports about the school that they purchase through the local authority.
- The school is therefore not improving quickly enough. Its improvement plans are over complex and unclear. They are ineffective.
- The headteacher does not hold senior and middle leaders properly to account for the outcomes resulting from their work. Their roles are neither well developed nor effective.
- Teaching is not challenging enough. Work set in lessons is too often not well suited to the needs of the pupils, especially those showing high ability or attainment who underachieve.
- Disadvantaged pupils underachieve. The school does not support them suitably, nor evaluate the outcomes for these pupils rigorously.
- Children in the early years do not achieve as well as they could. The provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is ineffectively led and managed.
- The needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not well enough met in day-to-day class lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour is positive but sometimes lapses when teaching does not engage them.

The school has the following strengths

- Phonics teaching is effective for most pupils.
- The school safeguards its pupils very well. They feel safe, happy and well looked after.
- Staff ensure that pupils for whom English is an additional language learn English quickly.
- The school effectively promotes good values.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that the school's self-evaluation is much more realistic and accurate
 - effectively and precisely planning for improvement in pupils' outcomes
 - ensuring that lines of accountability for pupils' outcomes are clear among phase leaders and the leaders of all subjects, and furthermore that these key leadership roles become much better developed and more influential
 - ensuring that pupil premium funding is well targeted to meet the range of different needs of disadvantaged pupils, and that outcomes for these pupils improve considerably and are carefully evaluated
 - carrying out the performance management of staff robustly and effectively
 - ensuring that the Nursery and Reception classes have effective oversight
 - improving significantly the work and influence of the academy trust
 - ensuring that the governing body, and the academy trust, hold the school properly to account and challenge it much more robustly to improve.
- Improve teaching, learning and the outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring that leaders and staff have much higher expectations of all pupils, including those with particularly high ability in different subjects
 - using assessment information better to provide challenging work for pupils
 - improving rapidly and very considerably the teaching of writing across the school
 - sharpening the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in class lessons
 - ensuring that pupils do not become bored or distracted in lessons.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- The school evaluates itself inaccurately and too generously. The headteacher and senior staff know about the key weaknesses but underestimate their importance. This leads to a lack of urgency in dealing with them. It also leads to too little ambition being shared by leaders with staff about how well pupils should do in their learning.
- The school has a great deal of management information and senior leaders create much paperwork, designed to show how well pupils are doing or the quality of the school's work. These documents too often make assertions which are not clearly supported in evidence.
- The school improvement plan is unfit for purpose. It is not sharply focused on addressing the school's weaker areas. It is not leading to sufficient improvement.
- Senior leaders are not effective enough in improving teaching and providing direction to staff and to middle leaders. They manage the performance of staff weakly. Senior leaders focus on checking what members of staff do, rather than assuring that what they do lifts outcomes for pupils. Teachers receive professional support and guidance from leaders but this is not enabling them to do a good job.
- Parents' views of the school are mixed, although most would recommend it. One described it for instance as 'a forward-thinking and nurturing school'. Some parents find the school welcoming and communicative; others do not. A number are concerned about what they see as the low profile and lack of availability of senior staff.
- The roles of phase assistant headteachers and subject leaders are underdeveloped. These leaders are themselves not well led or guided. The lines of accountability between leaders and teachers for outcomes for pupils are confused. Consequently, the leaders' hard work makes only very limited impact on how well pupils learn.
- The phase assistant headteachers are responsible for managing and improving provision and outcomes for most-able pupils. This work is unsuccessful.
- The school spends its pupil premium funding ineffectively. There is much activity paid for by the pupil premium but the school is not precise enough about what outcomes the expenditure is expected to make possible. As in previous years, this group of pupils is not learning enough. The school evaluates the impact of this expenditure weakly, although it is very clear that disadvantaged pupils underachieve.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is showing some improvement. The processes for identifying and assessing these pupils' needs are suitably managed, as are those for reviewing the pupils' progress. However, leaders do not ensure that the needs of these pupils are well met, with high expectations, in day-to-day class-based lessons.
- The school teaches a broad curriculum and provides some worthwhile out-of-school hours activities. Pupils have lessons in a range of subjects through the 'Nelson Learning Challenge' and they make choices in the 'Nelson University'. Pupils like the new forest school provision. However, the school cannot show strong outcomes for pupils across these subjects.

- There is some unreliability within the curriculum. What is taught can depend somewhat on the interests and skills of particular teachers. The school has no contingency to deal with the recent absence of the music teacher, so this subject is not being taught. Some parents are disappointed that Year 2 pupils will not be in this year's Christmas production, as has been the case in the past. One parent spoke for others in commenting, 'There are some extremely creative children... and therefore I think there should be a bigger focus on other areas – sports, theatre, music, creativity.'
- The school promotes values effectively through lessons and assemblies. Pupils show generally strong understanding of life in Britain and fundamental British values, such as tolerance. They talk about these knowledgeably, explaining how they apply them. Older pupils enjoyed active participation in an assembly about Diwali, with parents present.
- The school spends its sports funding suitably. Pupils participate in an increasing range of sporting activity inside and outside school hours.
- The headteacher has been successful in recruiting a stable and committed group of staff. This has not been easy as the school is expanding, with additional vacancies to fill. Staff are proud to work at the school, although have differing views on how well they are supported.
- Inspectors strongly recommend that the school does not appoint more newly qualified teachers.
- The support from the Waldegrave Academy Trust, which includes that of a national leader of education, is not successful enough. It is useful in supporting 'back office' functions, such as finance and personnel, especially in the aftermath of becoming an academy. That support is designed to allow the headteacher the time to improve teaching and learning. But that objective has not been successfully achieved, and the academy trust has not adequately supported or checked on this.

Governance

- The trust holds the formal governance responsibility for the school. Most functions, however, are delegated to the school's own governing body, which includes members of the trust. The governing body has recruited some experienced members. The chair, for example, is also vice-chair of governors at Waldegrave School. The governing body has a suitable committee structure and its members are active in visiting the school and attending meetings. Governors ensure that the school safeguards the pupils well.
- However, other than safeguarding, activity by governors is not successful. The governing body does not challenge senior leaders systematically to bring the needed improvement. Governors are aware of, but underestimate, the challenges faced by the school. They are very trusting of reports from the headteacher and other leaders, and do not question these sufficiently. For example, governors have not adequately challenged the school's weak performance in writing, with their minutes reporting this more as a national problem than one that this school needs to deal with itself. The work of the governing body demonstrates little understanding of the acute seriousness of the school's problems.

- The academy trust purchases school improvement support from the local authority. This has been in place throughout the time of the academy. Trust members and governors set great store by this advice and the reports about the school's development which have been produced over time through the local authority. These reports consistently overrate the school's success. They refer to the weaknesses, but the importance of these is much understated. In minutes of meetings and reports, the trust, governors and local authority congratulate each other and the headteacher, emphasising improvement and change from the time of the predecessor school. This approach leads to a deeply shared, but undue, sense of security about the quality of the school's current work among leaders, trustees and governors. It does not give the headteacher the challenge and support that she needs.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are correctly and regularly trained in child protection. They are confident in what they need to do when required. They understand their responsibilities to prevent radicalisation and extremism. The school's safeguarding policy is very clear, appropriately detailed and up to date. The school has well-trained designated safeguarding officers, led by the deputy headteacher. The school deals with any child protection concerns competently and efficiently, working with parents and other agencies as needed.
- The school maintains appropriate and accurate safeguarding records, including the registers of adults working in the school and for pupil admissions. It checks that staff are recruited correctly. Staff assess the risks in school activities appropriately. There are correct and proper arrangements for adults to come in and out of the school.
- Pupils receive useful education in safety matters, including road safety and e-safety. They understand appropriately the importance of these things. They feel safe in school.
- One pupil summed this all up very well on behalf of a group asked by an inspector what was the best thing about the school: 'They (the staff) know how to keep the children safe!'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching is not ambitious enough. In many lessons, too little is expected of the pupils and consequently they make too little progress.
- Some parents are understandably concerned. One said for example, 'The standard of teaching is not good enough. My child is often not challenged.'
- The teaching of the most able pupils across subjects is inadequate. These pupils do not typically receive the challenging teaching and tasks they need to learn well and attain highly.
- Staff assess pupils with reasonable accuracy in English and mathematics. But these assessments are not used to promote rapid enough learning, with the right level of demanding tasks for pupils.

- In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils learned about long division. They were interested and could explain what they were doing. However, all the pupils were completing the same tasks and so some groups, particularly the most able, were not challenged with the appropriate tasks to maximise their learning. This group could readily and successfully complete the sums given to them.
- The teaching of writing is particularly weak. Teachers expect too little of pupils. For example, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to use their knowledge of different aspects of writing, such as punctuation and story structure, in a meaningful way. These different aspects are not well linked together. Therefore, pupils' learning is not coherent and they do not make enough progress. Teachers in Year 6 do somewhat better. In this year group, pupils undertake more writing tasks which help them 'join up' their learning but this is too late to be fully effective. Even in Year 6, potentially higher-attaining writers are not given enough opportunity to shine.
- The school has sought to develop the marking of pupils' work. However, inspectors found that teachers apply the school's policy inconsistently. In some cases, feedback does not help pupils to focus on the key elements of lessons. In one example, a pupil was told unnecessarily by a teacher to start sentences with a capital letter, when the pupil was ready, but needed some help, to work on the main learning about parts of speech.
- The teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not consistently focused well enough. In class lessons, teaching assistants support these pupils at times. These staff help to engage the pupils in the lesson content but too often do not help the pupils to achieve clear and purposeful learning goals.
- The school also operates a range of specific, focused interventions for some pupils with special needs. These are more effective in helping the pupils to learn.
- Phonics and early reading are taught with reasonable success. This meets the needs of most pupils.
- In one lesson, in Year 1, the teacher showed the class, in a lively way, 'qu', 'ch' and 'th' sounds, which the pupils then used effectively to read some basic words. However, this lesson lacked challenge for the pupils who were ready to do more.
- Staff have strong and positive relationships with their pupils. Teachers often explain things to them clearly and question them engagingly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils have relatively few opportunities to contribute to the school community, or undertake responsible roles. They show confidence and benefit from those that do exist, such as when older pupils help younger ones.
- Pupils' attendance is about average. Over time, it is too low for disadvantaged pupils. With that important exception, the school has suitably working systems to promote

regular attendance and punctuality among its pupils.

- Pupils and staff report some bullying. Pupils are very clear that this is dealt with very well by adults. Some parents and staff think that senior leaders are not approachable enough if their help is needed to address behaviour concerns. The evidence is clear that the instances of bullying are diminishing and rare, and also that pupils feel confident and equipped to deal with it.
- Although the school seeks to hear the voices of the pupils, this is not always effective and there are limited means for this to take place. One pupil said to inspectors, 'Not all adults listen to us.'
- The school works effectively to help and guide pupils who need support or who may be especially vulnerable in some way. This appropriately involves parents and other agencies, although some parents would like more contact and information in these situations.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In lessons and assemblies, where the teaching is insufficiently challenging or stimulating, pupils' otherwise positive and compliant behaviour deteriorates. They become distracted and restless, starting to daydream and fidget. This behaviour sometimes distracts others and takes pupils away from their learning.
- The school has made several recent fixed-term exclusions and is rightly seeking to reduce the incidence of these.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and happy to discuss their work in school. They play cheerfully together in the playground and move around the school safely and considerately.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils' writing is very poor for their ages, right across the school. Pupils write untidily, without forming their letters consistently or correctly. Their use of grammar, punctuation and spelling is too often inaccurate. This precludes pupils from expressing their good ideas clearly enough in writing.
- There are some gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge and the school knows this. To some extent, these gaps are being addressed. Nevertheless, scrutiny of work shows that pupils are not making the progress that they should.
- Disadvantaged pupils, entitled to the support of pupil premium funding, underachieve considerably across the school in all subjects and this has been the continuing pattern over time. The school is not successful in addressing this.
- Pupils who show high ability are not challenged well enough. Much too little is expected of them. Their work and tasks are too easy and the school inadequately recognises this problem.
- In 2016, pupils at Year 6 performed weakly in their assessments in English and mathematics. Their writing was particularly poor. Very few pupils reached a high standard, as was also true in the previous year, and pupils made too little progress.

- In 2016, in Year 2, there was a similar story. The pupils' results, in reaching the expected standard in reading and mathematics, were mediocre and they were low in writing. Too few pupils across the subjects reached the higher standards, as was the case too in 2015.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities underachieve. The outcomes and progress for this group, nevertheless, are a little better than for other underachieving groups of pupils mentioned earlier. The school has a somewhat better grip on providing for this group than it does for some others.
- In the 2016 Year 1 phonics screening check, pupils' results declined a little from an above-average position in 2015. Few disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standard. Over time, however, there is a trend of improvement in pupils' phonics knowledge from a low base in previous cohorts. This was reflected by the pupils who inspectors heard read. They did so with confidence and reasonable accuracy, showing sound comprehension.
- In Reception, about an average proportion of children reached a good level of development in 2015 and 2016. This also shows improvement from a very low position in previous years. However, these pupils could achieve more. Their learning is not as rapid as it could be. Again, the school has not clearly enough recognised this problem.
- The school does not have reliable information about standards in the other subjects. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are low. For example, pupils were keen to learn about a religious festival but they were mainly expected to learn factual information, rather than the deeper significance of the festival. There was little challenge in this and some lost interest.
- Pupils who join the school with limited English generally achieve as well or better than their peers. Staff are adept at modelling and demonstrating English words and phrases, enabling the pupils to learn and develop their language skills swiftly.
- Pupils are not well enough prepared as they move on from class to class and eventually to secondary education. In particular, their weak writing skills, and gaps in their mathematical understanding, stop them from being fully ready.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Children in Reception do not achieve as well as they should, given their starting points. This is particularly true in respect of their literacy skills. Their early writing is not good enough. Boys fare less well than girls.
- The Nursery is very new and it is not yet possible to evaluate it fully. However, the weaknesses in teaching and learning identified by inspectors apply in both Nursery and Reception.
- The teaching is of mixed, but insufficient, quality. Some teaching helps children to learn well, notably in phonics. Staff taught pupils effectively to retell the 'Little Red Riding Hood' story. At other times, the adults ask unchallenging questions, or set unambitious tasks, which do little to increase children's understanding. For instance,

some children were colouring in for no clear purpose during a literacy task.

- Staff plan for the early years classes weakly. Lessons and activities are not consistently challenging enough. Tasks are not suitably adjusted to meet the assessed needs of the children. Children's learning journals show that learning activities are not well enough suited to their needs. Planning for the indoors and outdoors is separate, which leads to disjointed learning.
- Reception children cannot easily move between the outdoors and indoors which adds to the disjoint. The outdoor area is tired and needs refurbishment. It is not as exciting and productive a learning environment as it could be.
- The children do not consistently develop the expected skills and dispositions in independent learning, sharing, concentration and perseverance. In lessons observed in Nursery and Reception, many learning activities were insufficiently effective due to weak planning and teaching. Children were left unsure what to do and lost interest.
- Children entitled to the support of the pupil premium receive weak provision and make too little progress. The planning seen by inspectors for them was cursory.
- The early years is inadequately led and managed. Leaders do not know the weaknesses well enough. The improvement in the proportion of children assessed as reaching a good level of development in the last few years has helped lead to a false sense of security. The school evaluates early years provision much too highly. Staff are unsure how to make the further improvements needed or why they are necessary.
- Children are well safeguarded in Nursery and Reception. They are cared for appropriately and kindly and feel secure, and proper arrangements are made by staff to ensure their physical safety.
- Staff provide well for the specific needs of children who speak English as an additional language. For instance, some helpful, well-focused teaching of initial letter sounds and vocabulary was observed for children in this group.
- Early years staff have constructive relationships with parents. Many parents commented to inspectors that their children have settled well in the early years and feel safe and happy.

School details

Unique reference number	140376
Local authority	Richmond upon Thames
Inspection number	10019643

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	536
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pamela Crisp
Headteacher	Clare Pugh
Telephone number	020 8894 9899
Website	www.nelson.richmond.sch.uk
Email address	info@nelson.richmond.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- This is a large primary school with a newly opened part-time Nursery. It is growing, with three classes in all years from Reception to Year 4, and two classes in each of Years 5 and 6.
- Nelson Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 January 2014. When its predecessor school, which had the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it required special measures.
- The headteacher joined the predecessor school, while it was in special measures, in September 2013.

- Nelson Primary is one of two schools within the Waldegrave Trust. The other is Waldegrave School, a nearby girls' secondary school. The headteacher of that school is a national leader of education. She is a member of the trust board.
- The school sustains a close working relationship with the local authority, one of whose senior officers works as the school improvement partner, supporting the headteacher, governors and trustees. The school also works alongside other local schools.
- In 2015, the school met the floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. However, it is unlikely to do so under the new national assessment arrangements for 2016, the outcomes of which have yet to be validated.
- About half of the pupils are White British. The other half come from many different heritages, the largest of which is Pakistani.
- A larger than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- About one in every nine pupils is entitled to the support of pupil premium funding. This is about half of the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes, many jointly with senior leaders. They observed around the school and at playtimes, lunchtimes and during assemblies.
- They looked at samples of pupils' work in several subjects.
- They held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors and many members of staff. They spoke with a school improvement partner from the local authority. They met with groups of pupils formally and informally, and heard pupils from Years 1, 2 and 4 read in class.
- Inspectors evaluated documents, including the school's strategic plan and evaluations, assessments of pupils, records of attendance and behaviour, and minutes of meetings.
- Inspectors took close account of documents and information provided to them by the school, and undertook many observations and discussions with school representatives, as specifically requested by senior leaders.
- They took close account of the views of parents from the 166 responses on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. This included written remarks. Inspectors also spoke with parents. They analysed carefully the opinions of staff from confidential questionnaires.

Inspection team

Robin Hammerton, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Clementina Aina	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Roberts	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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