

Northlands Primary School and Nursery

Winifred Road, Pitsea, Basildon, Essex SS13 3JQ

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2019

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors are dedicated to providing a good-quality education for pupils. They ensure that pupils are exceptionally well cared for and make good progress across a range of subjects.
- The leadership of English is strong. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in this subject.
- Children get off to a 'flying start' in the nursery classes. Their curriculum is interesting and effectively organised. Children are happy and make good progress from their starting points.
- Children's achievement is improving by the end of the Reception Year. Year on year, more children are developing their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Children are appropriately prepared for Year 1.
- Leaders provide exceptionally well for pupils' personal and social development. This aspect of the school's work is exemplary.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge skilfully when teaching writing. As a result, pupils make good progress and develop their skills well. By the end of key stage 2, pupils produce high-quality work.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are exceptionally well cared for. Adults provide effectively for pupils with more complex needs through the recently introduced specialist provision.
- Leaders and governors make careful and thoughtful use of additional funds, such as pupil premium and sports funding, to support the progress that pupils make.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 2 is rising year on year. In 2018, the proportion of pupils who reached the required standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined was above the national average.
- Pupils in key stage 1 are not making as much progress as they should, especially in mathematics. Leaders have firm plans in place to change the curriculum.
- Not enough pupils consistently reach the higher standards at the end of key stages.
- Pupils conduct themselves suitably in class and around the school. They get on well together and have good relationships with adults.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average. Too many pupils are persistently absent. Leaders are addressing this issue diligently.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement further by:
 - ensuring that more pupils reach the required standards by the end of key stage 1
 - providing sufficient opportunities for more pupils to reach the higher standards
 - developing pupils' knowledge, understanding and use of mathematics more securely, so more pupils make good progress.
- Review and make amendments to the school's strategy for reducing absence and persistent absenteeism, so that both are more in line with national averages.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders communicate their vision and values clearly and to good effect. They have a precise understanding of what the school does well and where improvements are needed. They are diligent in addressing any issues raised so that more pupils can succeed.
- The school joined the Lee Chapel Multi Academy Trust (the trust) in September 2016. Under the effective support and challenge of the chief executive officer and other trust staff, leaders at Northlands Primary and Nursery continue to improve the quality of education. Leaders at all levels speak highly about the support they receive from the trust.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the many different barriers to learning faced by the large numbers of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND. Careful and thoughtful support, through counselling and other high-quality pastoral care and guidance, is proving very successful in helping pupils to develop confidence in themselves and their learning. Leaders use additional funds such as the pupil premium effectively.
- Leadership of pupils with SEND is a strength of the school. The inclusion team provide a cohesive approach to supporting pupils who have often very complex needs. The recent introduction of the Bubbles room is proving highly effective. The few pupils who access this additional and intensive support receive expert care and support from well-trained adults. Pupils' needs are being comprehensively met.
- The leadership of English is highly effective. This team places great importance on the teaching of early reading. Leaders have revamped the curriculum and provided training to staff to improve their understanding and skills. This has resulted in a clearer and more consistent approach to the teaching of reading. Although pupils' achievement in phonics may be lower this year, they are making better progress from their starting points.
- The quality of leadership for mathematics is developing. There is still more to be done to revise the curriculum so that pupils develop and deepen their mathematical understanding. Practical resources and different ways to learn the basics of number are not as well established in key stage 1. Leaders have accurately and logically identified the necessary improvements required in the mathematics curriculum.
- Leaders who manage other subjects across the curriculum continue to improve the quality of teaching in their subject area. They have designed the curriculum effectively so that their subjects are taught appropriately and contribute to a good-quality overall education. They understand where teaching is strong and where the quality could be even better and work with enthusiasm to ensure that pupils receive their entitlement to a full and varied curriculum.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is well established. Pupils often learn about other cultures during events such as a whole-school international week. Children in Reception spoke easily and confidently about their learning and the story that was being read to them each day.

- Leaders use the sports premium increasingly effectively. Pupils enjoy the sports coaching they receive and the many additional extra-curricular activities and events that are in place. Lunchtime sporting activities, such as the football licence, have had a positive impact on sustaining pupils' good behaviour and conduct during less structured times.
- All staff who responded to their online questionnaire were overwhelmingly proud to work at the school. One comment, 'working together means shared workloads, planning and improved results', reflected staff's positive view of how well leaders take account of staff workload when making decisions.
- Most of the 30 parents who responded to their online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to others. Evidence from the school's own surveys are equally positive. Nearly all parents consider their children are happy, safe and well taught. One parent commented, 'My son has made unbelievable progress and we could not be happier' and another parent commented, 'The school does a lot for the children and is an encouraging and a lovely place to learn, with caring teachers and good communication.'

Governance of the school

- Under the skilful leadership of the chair of governors, the governing body hold leaders to account for maintaining and developing the school's strong ethos, vision and values.
- Governors ensure that pupils are very much at the centre of all the decisions made. Consequently, the local governing body has an accurate understanding of strengths and the continued areas for improvement.
- Governors' minutes demonstrate that they ask relevant questions in meetings so that leaders have to explain and account for decisions made. Governors request further information and regularly visit the school to satisfy themselves that pupils receive the best provision possible. They perform their duties effectively.
- The local governing body works effectively across the wider leadership of the six schools in the trust. The chair of governors is a representative on the trust board. As a result, there is a collective and shared approach between the school and the trust that works well. Clear roles and responsibilities are effectively in place.
- Not only do governors provide the necessary challenge, they offer support and guidance to the headteacher. They ensure that the welfare of leaders and staff is considered so that pupils receive the very best quality of education.
- Governors ensure the effective use of funds. They monitor financial expenditure carefully to ensure that the school provides good value for money.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that statutory child protection training and policies are in place. All staff are alert to their responsibilities to safeguard pupils. Adults receive regular useful updates and training. They are vigilant and follow the school's procedures diligently.

- Processes and procedures for the recruitment of staff comply with current legislation. Governors regularly audit safeguarding procedures.
- The designated safeguarding leaders respond quickly when required to respond to children's safeguarding needs. They work effectively with relevant external agencies and support parents to access suitable help and support when needed.
- Child protection records are kept appropriately and demonstrate that leaders follow through concerns to ensure that pupils at risk are cared for well.
- The trust regularly checks the school's work on safeguarding to satisfy the trustees that all the necessary documentation is in good order. School leaders are quick to respond to feedback and act on the appropriate guidance provided from audits.
- Adults teach pupils strategies for keeping themselves safe. Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe. Older pupils explained how school staff often teach them about keeping safe on the internet. Pupils are confident that an adult at school would listen and help them if they had any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in most classes is good and leading to pupils making better progress. This is especially the case in reading and writing. Teachers use pupils' strong prior knowledge effectively in English to build skills through a well-developed curriculum. Pupils produce written work that is of a good quality. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard by Year 6 is improving each year.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and used well in lessons to explain new ideas and concepts. Teachers use appropriate technical vocabulary and encourage pupils to do the same. For example, in Year 1, pupils skilfully described their writing using appropriate vocabulary. They could identify where they had used specific words in their work and the reasons for their choice. Strong explanation by both adults and pupils was a positive feature in classes.
- Adults encourage pupils to present their work to a high standard. The school's procedures are consistently followed. As a result, pupils work diligently and try their best with presentation. On occasions, the standard of handwriting is not as good as it could be. Younger pupils have regular practice so that their handwriting skills improve.
- Pupils' exercise books demonstrate that they are provided with activities that help build their knowledge and skills over time. In subjects such as science and topic, pupils can remember their learning well from previous years and how much they have learned over this year. Their books show that, in a range of subjects, pupils are making good progress.
- Pupils with SEND are provided for well. The teaching of reading for these pupils is strong. In upper key stage 2 pupils with SEND have made significant gains in reading. Adults use the information of pupils' prior attainment well to plan learning and track pupils that need to catch up in reading or who need additional support. The school's approach is proving effective and more pupils with SEND are making better progress as a result.
- Additional adults are used increasingly effectively. In Year 6, for example, adults are

highly effective in explaining the activities and motivating pupils in small groups to work hard. Adults have good relationships with pupils. In the best examples, adults provide encouraging environments for pupils to have a go and take risks.

- Targets for pupils to achieve more are used and suitably adapted in some classes. For SEND pupils, targets are more specific and useful, often linked to making progress in their individual plans or educational, health and care (EHC) plan. Equally other pupils who require additional support receive well considered and timely intervention.
- At times, not enough is expected of pupils who have the potential to achieve even more. More could still be expected of the most able pupils so that they can work at greater depth and demonstrate their skills and abilities further.
- In key stage 1, the teaching of mathematics does not focus as well as it should on building pupils' fluency with the basics of number. Pupils' books show that they move on too quickly for some and too slowly for others. Practical resources are not used often enough for pupils to grasp concepts. As a result, not enough pupils are building strong foundations for the key stage 2 mathematics curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and demonstrate a love of learning. They try hard in lessons and put a great deal of effort into tasks and activities. Pupils confidently speak about their work, their likes and dislikes and provide mature answers to questions.
- The school's work to provide for the most vulnerable pupils is exceptional. In the Bubbles room, for example, adults understand the complex needs of the pupils in their care. The curriculum is adapted so that these pupils can make personal and social progress.
- The provision of counselling and other pastoral support is exceptional. Pupils who may have been identified as vulnerable to social, emotional or mental health needs are provided with age-appropriate support and guidance. The school's approach is proving successful for pupils and their families.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and what it is not. Pupils spoken with could identify a person they would speak to if they were concerned. They stated that they were confident that adults would deal with concerns promptly. Pupils know how they can share concerns, either directly or through the 'worry boxes' that the school uses. Pupils have confidence in using both approaches.
- The school does have some pupils, often with multiple special educational needs who learn more effectively in the school's isolation classes. The use of this facility is very carefully monitored. Leaders ensure that pupils receive very effective pastoral support and guidance so that they are able to return to classes quickly when possible.
- Healthy lifestyles are well promoted. The youngest children in the school relish their daily run and encourage each other to succeed. At lunchtimes, there is much evidence of social enjoyment with friends. Chatting and laughing featured strongly during the

breakfast club and lunchtime sessions.

- The good-quality displays around the school demonstrate the wealth of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education that pupils receive.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' good conduct in and out of lessons is very evident. Rules and routines are very well established and followed. Right from the Nursery classes through to Year 6, adults consistently promote high expectations of conduct. Consequently, the school is a calm environment in which to learn.
- Attendance remains just below the national average this year. In 2018 it was below the national average and persistent absenteeism was too high. Leaders work hard to increase attendance through a combination of providing support and, where essential, through issuing fines. This is having some impact in reducing the persistent absenteeism of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, but it remains too high.
- There are very clear processes in place for rewards and sanctions for behaviour. A 'bumble bee' is highly regarded and pupils value choosing their class reward such as a disco or a class trip. Equally, platinum awards allocated for a term are seen as worth earning and kept for a term.
- Where the school has used fixed-term exclusions, these have been as a last resort. School evidence demonstrates that adults provide very effective pastoral support when they return to school and there are few incidents of repeat exclusions.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2018, the progress pupils made by the end of key stage 2 overall was average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Work from pupils' books demonstrates that pupils currently on roll are making good progress across all year groups in key stage 2 and in all three subjects.
- Pupils make particularly strong progress in Year 6. This is because the quality of teaching and adults precise use of assessment information to plan learning. The proportion of pupils who reached the required standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined in 2018 was just above the national average. School information and work in pupils' books demonstrates that the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard for this academic year is equally strong.
- Pupils' attainment in reading continues to improve by the end of key stage 2. Pupils in lower key stage 2 continue making good progress in reading from often low key stage 1 starting points. However, more could be done to ensure that the most able pupils reach the higher standards.
- There is a significant proportion of disadvantaged pupils who make good progress from their starting points. Where pupils also have SEND needs, these pupils are provided with work that is matched to their needs. School information, together with work in pupils' books, confirms that both disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are

making consistently good progress year on year.

- Pupils in Year 1 achieved well in the phonic screening check in 2018. This year, the indications are that the results will be lower. Leaders had identified reasons for this change. This year, pupils in Year 2 who needed to resit the screening check have been highly successful.
- In 2018, pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 1 was below that found nationally. In mathematics in particular, pupils continue to work hard but they are not sufficiently developing their understanding of basic concepts, so more of them reach the required standard by the end of Year 2.
- Year 6 pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They are provided with a range of subjects that helps build their creative, technological and scientific knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start their school life well. From starting points that are often below those typically found for their age, children make good progress. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development continues to rise. This year, provisional results indicate improved achievement in reading, writing and number, so a large proportion of children reach a good level of development. Children are increasingly suitably prepared for Year 1.
- Adults provide exceptionally well for children who attend the Nursery classes. A combination of hours is offered to parents so that children can have flexible arrangements. Children are cared for and every effort is made to plan learning activities that help children to become inquisitive learners and communicators.
- Leaders of the early years check children's starting points carefully when children start in Nursery. Leaders track the progress from these early starting points so that help and support can be quickly provided for children who require it.
- Adults have positive relationships with children. They know children well and help and support appropriately when needed. For example, when a child was keen to read all the individual name cards in a class, an adult swiftly responded, sat and carefully helped with sounding out each name. The positive relationship and careful questioning seen was replicated many times during the inspection.
- Children enjoy learning outside in the good-quality outdoor areas. They are encouraged to play kindly with one another and develop their language and physical skills. Children devise their own games, plan rules and enjoy being with their friends. Routines are firmly established. In both Nursery and Reception, children willingly follow adults' expectations for behaviour and conduct.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Lessons proceed quickly and easily. Children are provided with many opportunities to practise their sounds, blend them together and build their fluency of reading in class. In the early years classes the proportion of children acquiring their reading skills is improving each year. Systems and processes for effective teaching are well established.
- In Reception, children have many opportunities to develop their understanding of

number and shapes. Teaching is carefully planned so that children build up a strong understanding of mathematics. Teachers plan suitable activities for children to practise their skills. Consequently, more children have a good grasp of number and counting at the appropriate standard at the end of early years. Children learn to form letters and write systematically over the course of the year. Children's books demonstrate the good progress that they make. Children who started the year making marks on their page are now writing full sentences that can easily be read by an adult. Adults persevere with showing children how to correctly hold their pencil and form letters correctly. Children are becoming increasingly proficient in their writing skills.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 143125 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 10088641 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 638 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Craig O'Callaghan |
| Chair of the local governing body | Michael Smith |
| Headteacher | Jane Young |
| Telephone number | 01268 553434 |
| Website | www.northlandsprimary.essex.sch.uk |
| Email address | admin@northlandsprimary.essex.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected as an academy |

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average primary school. The school also provides pre-school provision in a separate building.
- The school is part of Lee Chapel Multi Academy Trust. It joined the trust in September 2016.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is in the top 20% of schools nationally. Over 45% of pupils are eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is higher than the national average, as is the number of pupils with an EHC plan.
- The proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first inspection since the school became an academy in 2016.
- Inspectors observed teaching for all year groups across a wide range of subjects. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher to determine the quality of teaching over time.
- Inspectors heard pupils reading aloud in class and as a small group, held formal meetings with a large number of pupils and informally discussed pupils' learning and work with them in class.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, which included: information about pupils' attendance and registration; pupils' achievement information; records of behaviour incidents; school self-evaluation; school improvement action plans; safeguarding and safer recruitment records and practices; the curriculum; and the monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Meetings were held with a range of leaders, including the headteacher and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer of the trust and subject leaders. A meeting was held with the chair and vice-chair of governors of the local governing body
- The views of 30 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, together with their comments on the free-text service were considered. The inspector also took account of the views of 24 staff who responded to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Kim Hall, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Nathan Lowe | Ofsted Inspector |
| Richard Hopkins | Ofsted Inspector |
| David Piercy | Ofsted Inspector |

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

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