

Inspection of John Ray Junior School

Notley Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 1HL

Inspection dates: 10–11 March 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, staff and parents and carers are all proud of the way in which the school has improved in recent years.

Pupils are extremely happy to be at the school. They talk enthusiastically about what staff do to make their learning fun and exciting. End-of-topic work, such as presenting artwork at the town hall, holding a science fair and creating a local history museum in the school grabs their interest. Pupils learn more now than in the past because teaching is much better in all year groups.

The school is calm and purposeful. Pupils do their very best. They listen to adults to help improve their learning. They also respond to adults' guidance on how to behave positively.

Bullying is rare, but if it does happen it is dealt with swiftly. This helps pupils feel safe and secure in the school. All pupils benefit from the emphasis school leaders place on them taking care of themselves, both physically and emotionally.

There are clear expectations that all pupils must achieve the best they can in all parts of school life. The promotion of reading and writing in particular means that more pupils will leave the school well prepared for secondary education.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

This year, leaders and teachers have been successful in improving the quality of education. The curriculum helps pupils to develop knowledge in a logical order. They have plenty of opportunities to practise what they have learned. In mathematics, for example, pupils are better at calculating numbers. This is leading to much improved outcomes for the pupils.

Leaders have made reading a priority. Pupils have a refurbished library with an exciting range of books. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about reading. They are becoming more fluent readers. Older pupils choose more demanding books to read. Teachers identify the skills that pupils need to be able to understand these texts well. They make sure that pupils learn to identify new vocabulary and find out what these words mean. This is increasingly having a positive impact on pupils' writing. Pupils now write at greater length and for longer periods of time.

There are some subjects where the curriculum is not fully developed. Leaders are effectively addressing this. For example, the curriculum in physical education (PE) is in place, but the order in which some aspects of PE should be taught is still being refined.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school's work. The school's core values and 'the three rights' are well known by pupils.

These, along with the school's behaviour strategies, help to resolve any issues and help pupils take responsibility for their own actions. As a result of leaders' programmes, pupils develop positive relationships and build confidence, independence and resilience. For instance, all pupils study the 'We are John Ray' unit of work, during which they consider relationships and personal, social and health education.

Pupils are largely positive about their education and enjoy their time in school. Some pupils' attendance is still lower than it should be. Leaders are working to address this, but attendance remains below the national average.

Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have the help they need. Teachers adapt their teaching so that pupils with SEND learn effectively alongside their peers. The school has established links with the local community. Leaders work closely with external agencies and families. As a result, leaders know what pupils' needs are and have the skills and support to address these.

Staff are very positive about the improvements to the school brought about by the leadership team. They feel that their opinions count. Leaders are mindful of staff workload. They support staff as staff take on new positions of responsibility. Trustees and governors know the school well. They support and challenge leaders effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture. There are highly effective systems for recording concerns that ensure that designated leaders for safeguarding are notified immediately. Pupils are able to speak to an adult if they need to. Leaders promptly take appropriate actions to follow up on concerns raised. The right support is put in place and pupils get the help they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet fully coherent in every subject. Pupils therefore do not experience the same high-quality provision in all subjects. It is clear that leaders are in the process of bringing this about. For this reason, the transition arrangements have been applied. Leaders need to ensure that they finalise and implement their curriculum plans so that pupils know and remember more in every subject of the national curriculum.
- Attendance is lower than the national average. Some pupils miss out on aspects of their education because they are not in school as much as they should be.

Leaders need to increase levels of attendance so that these are at least in line with the national average.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 143538 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 10121334 |
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 7 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 402 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Bruce Hanley |
| Headteacher | Karen Harrison |
| Website | http://johnray.changesp.org |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- John Ray Junior School converted to become an academy on 1 April 2017. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted on 27 January 2016, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school became part of the CHANGE Schools Partnership in April 2017.
- The current headteacher took up her post in September 2018 after previously being the head of school from April 2017. There have been several changes to leadership and staffing since John Ray Junior became an academy in 2017.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher, the three assistant headteachers and staff.
- We held discussions with the chief executive officer of the trust, the local authority school effectiveness partner and representatives of the local governing body and trust board.

- We visited lessons to look at work and spoke with pupils about what it is like to be a pupil at this school.
- We spoke with pupils and staff about how the school keeps pupils safe. We considered safeguarding records and documentation in the school, along with the single central record. We met with the safeguarding leads and staff who maintain the single central record.
- We scrutinised a range of school documents, including the school's own self-evaluation and its improvement plans and records about behaviour and attendance.
- We spoke with parents and carers at the start of the school day. We considered the 73 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 64 responses to Ofsted's free-text system. Additionally, we took account of the 38 responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, writing, mathematics, science and PE. In each subject, we visited lessons, scrutinised work in pupils' books and held discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils.

Inspection team

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|----------------------------|------------------|
| Sean Tobin, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Angela Savill | Ofsted Inspector |
| Maureen Okoye | Ofsted Inspector |

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