

Little Thurrock Primary School

Rectory Road, Grays, Essex RM17 5SW

Inspection dates

12–13 December 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Safeguarding is ineffective. Leaders do not take timely follow-up actions with other agencies to protect vulnerable pupils from harm. Leaders cannot show that all the necessary checks are made before appointing new staff.
- Leaders have not ensured that all pupils, including the most able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make enough progress.
- Additional funding is not used well enough to improve the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils.
- The quality of teaching varies too widely across classes.
- Assessment procedures do not provide leaders with a clear overview of how well pupils are progressing.
- Leaders' views of the school are inaccurate because they are not firmly based on a thorough evaluation of its work.
- The governing body does not provide enough challenge for senior leaders to make improvements.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the previous inspection, positive steps have been taken to develop new and existing leaders. This has built capacity to make improvements.
- New procedures to provide pupils with regular support and challenge are leading to improvements.
- Pupils attend school regularly, behave well and feel safe in school.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' interest and enjoyment of school.
- Effective phonics teaching has ensured that an above-average proportion of pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Most of the parents who responded during the inspection are supportive of the school's work, particularly the wide range of experiences provided for their children.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- As a matter of urgency, strengthen the school's safeguarding procedures by:
 - checking that all the necessary checks on adults currently working in the school have been made
 - ensuring that suitable recruitment checks are made for all new staff, and these are systematically recorded
 - maintaining detailed records to provide assurance that all child protection concerns are followed up promptly and systematically
 - ensuring that leaders demonstrate that every possible action is taken to keep vulnerable pupils safe.
- Raise achievement by:
 - securing good quality of teaching and learning in all classes
 - sharpening the school's assessment procedures so that the headteacher and the extended leadership team have a thorough understanding of how well all pupils are progressing
 - ensuring that new procedures to provide pupils with regular, additional support and challenge become firmly established and lead to improvement, particularly for the most able pupils and those with SEND
 - using the pupil premium far more effectively to improve the outcomes achieved by disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the school's leadership and management by:
 - evaluating accurately what the school does well, what it needs to improve upon and using this information to set clear, measurable targets in the school's plans for improvement
 - providing senior leaders, including the leader of the early years provision, with the support they need to develop their roles fully, and holding them accountable for making rapid improvements
 - providing governors with further training and the information they need to give greater challenge for leaders to secure improvements.

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

An external review of the use of the pupil premium 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

- Leaders have not maintained the school's effectiveness since the previous inspection, regarding the arrangements to safeguard and protect pupils, and to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Over time, most pupils have made steady rather than good progress. Leaders' actions have not prevented different groups of pupils from regularly underachieving. Leaders are not fully aware of the reasons why different groups of pupils do not achieve well enough.
- The headteacher and the team of senior leaders do not demonstrate a firm understanding of how well pupils are currently achieving. Weaknesses in assessment mean that leaders are unable to identify which pupils need additional support or challenge. Consequently, leaders do not intervene quickly enough to prevent some pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, the most able and those with SEND, from underachieving.
- The headteacher evaluates the school's effectiveness as good. Inspection findings do not support this view. Observations carried out by inspectors and senior staff, and a limited quantity of leaders' monitoring information shared during the inspection do not support leaders' view that it is consistently good.
- The reasons for pupils' lack of progress have not been fully considered. Senior leaders have a minimal amount of evidence gained from their own monitoring of teaching to inform their judgements about the quality of the provision.
- Improvement plans are suitably prioritised but not all the targets set by leaders to gauge improvement are sufficiently clear or measurable.
- The pupil premium is not used effectively. Spending is not specifically targeted towards the needs of the pupils it is intended for. Much of the spending is allocated to improve outcomes for all pupils, rather than the things that would improve the achievements of those known to be disadvantaged. This dilutes the impact of this additional funding on the achievement that disadvantaged pupils make.
- A recently appointed leader is improving the provision for pupils with SEND. More systematic procedures to support these pupils and better liaison with their class teachers is leading to improvement.
- Improvements are less evident for the most able pupils. It is also unclear which senior leader has specific responsibility for raising the achievement of the pupils known to be disadvantaged.
- Training and support provided since the previous inspection have led to middle leaders working much more cohesively. This is leading to improved progress made by pupils. Middle leaders show a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Increasingly, they are engaged in monitoring teaching in their subjects and year groups and evaluating the impact this has on the progress made by pupils.
- New and recently qualified teachers speak favourably about the quality of induction and support provided for them by leaders.

- Daily literacy and numeracy lessons are complemented by a broad range of subjects taught in two-week 'blocks' to enable pupils to learn in-depth. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in physical education (PE) funded by the PE and sport premium.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has overseen a period of decline since the previous inspection. Governors have not been successful in challenging leaders to secure improvements to the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- Governors have not been rigorous enough in checking the school's safeguarding procedures. Their regular checks have not spotted basic weaknesses in record-keeping, employment checks on staff and child protection procedures. Governors acknowledge that 'the paper-trail for safeguarding is not there'.
- This year, governors have reinstated a small working group to analyse in detail the information about the school's performance, and to provide further challenge for senior leaders. This is a sensible approach. However, it is dependent on a better flow of information to governors than is currently available, from the headteacher, about the quality of teaching and its impact on the attainment and progress of all pupils.
- The school's team of senior leaders is newly formed this year. Governors have now appropriately charged the headteacher with developing the roles of senior leaders to enable them to contribute fully to school improvement.
- In general, governors ensure that the school's budget is managed effectively. However, governors have not taken enough responsibility for planning and reviewing the spending of the pupil premium funding. This year's spending plans are broadly similar to last year's, even though the plans last year made little difference to the progress made by disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Over time, there has been a lack of attention paid to safeguarding pupils. Records have not been properly maintained. Not all checks have been made and recorded. Prompt action has not been taken to record what leaders have done to protect vulnerable pupils at risk of harm. Recently, some progress has been made in improving this, but significant gaps in child protection arrangements remain.
- The single central record includes information about the backgrounds and qualifications of staff appointed to work in the school. However, evidence to confirm that these routine checks have been made are not stored suitably in the personal files of each member of staff. Consequently, leaders are unable to demonstrate that these checks have been carried out.
- Currently, leaders are unable to show that serious concerns relating to pupils' safety and well-being have been followed up in a timely way. Actions taken jointly with social services and the police to protect pupils from harm are not recorded systematically.
- The headteacher is suitably trained in safeguarding children. Training in safeguarding

for staff, including the 'Prevent' duty is up to date.

- The school site is secure. Fencing, gates and doorways control access to the buildings and school grounds appropriately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching varies too much across classes and, as a result, some pupils do not receive the same consistently good teaching as other pupils in the same year group. Where teaching is effective, pupils make good progress over time. Where teaching is less effective, time is wasted, and progress slows.
- Teachers do not plan sufficiently well for pupils of different abilities. In some lessons, an over-reliance on worksheets leads to the most able pupils not being adequately challenged. At times, questioning is superficial and does not test or deepen pupils' understanding.
- Teachers are expected to plan learning that meets the needs of those with SEND. In the past this has not always worked well enough. This is improving due to the better coordination of provision for these pupils matched to their individual learning plans. Greater attention is also being paid to the monitoring of their personal, social and emotional well-being to ensure that these pupils are ready for learning.
- New approaches implemented and monitored by subject- and year-leaders are leading to improvements. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own learning, in line with the school's agreed procedures, and let teachers know at the end of each day if they feel they need further support. Staff respond by providing pupils with a range of follow-up activities that promptly fill gaps, correct misconceptions and provide the most able pupils with additional challenges to extend their learning.
- Phonics teaching is a strength of the school. In both key stages, pupils are confident readers. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to read frequently and write at length. There are regular opportunities for guided reading, using pupils' own chosen books. Inspectors noted the correct use of punctuation and complex vocabulary used in the redrafting of writing completed by pupils in Year 6.
- Training for teachers has added consistency to the teaching of mathematics. In key stage 1, teachers make sure that skills are securely understood and practised before moving on to more challenging work. In key stage 2, older pupils showed confidence in using decimals, place value and manipulating fractions. They worked cooperatively in pairs to solve problems and apply their reasoning skills.
- Most teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Pupils understand what teachers expect of them.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Although the school's safeguarding procedures are ineffective, pupils feel safe in

school. They told inspectors that it is a safe place to be, and that incidents of bullying, mostly name-calling, are rare and dealt with effectively by staff. A typical comment from pupils was that 'this is a school where nobody is mean or hurts anyone else'.

- Weekly personal, social and health education lessons, opportunities to debate the 'Big Question' and daily assemblies make a good contribution to raising pupils' awareness of British values and promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents appreciate the wider opportunities provided to enrich pupils' lives, including trips to the theatre and ballet, and a range of after-school clubs. During the inspection a large group of parents admired the younger pupils and children who starred in the school's nativity play.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Throughout the inspection, pupils were polite, well-mannered and eager to share their views about the school.
- Teachers model the expectations of pupils, for example, by not raising their voices. Noise is kept to a minimum in lessons when pupils work in small groups to avoid disturbing the learning of others.
- Pupils understand the school's procedures to manage their behaviour. They know that a 'red card' leads to a removal of privileges, including losing personal time. Very few pupils are excluded from school.
- Outside of lessons, pupils' conduct is good. Most pupils play games or chat together in friendship groups. Inspectors noted that pupils engage readily in independent outdoor play and learning (OPAL). However, due to the nature of some of the equipment that is not specifically designed for play, some of these activities require continued close supervision by staff to maintain pupils' safety.
- Pupils attend well and enjoy school. Very few pupils are persistently absent from school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Although pupils' attainment in key stage 1 has been consistently above average for the past three years, comparatively few of the most able pupils have exceeded the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress slows in key stage 2. Results achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 have remained broadly average in recent years. Teaching has not challenged pupils to achieve their very best. Consequently, the proportions of the most able pupils attaining at a higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics have remained low.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics has remained below national averages for the past three years.
- Until recently, pupils with SEND have not received effective support to enable them to make strong progress from their various starting points. Improved monitoring is ensuring that teachers plan more-suitable learning for them. Tailored support from

teachers and assistants is enabling these pupils to catch up where appropriate and attain their personal targets.

- Inspectors' observations and scrutiny of pupils' work in lessons confirmed leaders' views that the coordinated actions of subject- and year-leaders is leading to improved progress. Teachers are planning learning that stimulates pupils' interest and is increasingly challenging for them.
- In Years 3 and 4, work in pupils' work shows good examples of challenge and mastery in mathematics. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' books show that, over time, they are making improved progress and are currently attaining age-related expectations in writing and mathematics. Pupils read confidently and fluently and enjoy reading.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children in Nursery settle quickly and form good relations with staff and other children. Purpose-built facilities are used well to promote learning. Children engage well in a range of creative tasks, role-play and using information technology.
- Adults ensure that children are kept safe. Adult-led activities support children's learning well and children make better progress in these tasks than they do during free-flow activities. At times, when children 'flit' between child-initiated play, adults do not intervene promptly to provide guidance and consolidate learning.
- In Reception, children readily engage in learning, explore and enjoy playing together. The curriculum is planned to enable children to develop knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas of learning. Phonics teaching is systematic and effective. Consistent use of the school's chosen phonics programme ensures that early reading is well developed.
- Behaviour is generally good, but areas can become noisy and disorganised during free-flow between classrooms and outside areas. Staff model the use of language effectively but do not take enough opportunity to embed routines by reminding children of their conduct, such as walking rather than running.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been above average for the past three years. Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are all consistently high.
- Teaching is too variable. The monitoring of teaching is underdeveloped. Teachers do not make full use of the assessment information available to plan learning that meets children's needs. During child-initiated learning and play, adults do not consistently intervene early enough to retain children's interest and develop their understanding.
- The leadership of early years is currently being developed. The new leader joined the early years setting this academic year. She shows a clear vision and passion for developing provision in nursery and Reception. She has quickly identified what is working well and where improvements are needed.
- Improving the use of initial and ongoing assessments is an identified priority to ensure that they accurately highlight the progress children make over time.

School details

Unique reference number	114839
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10054436

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	674
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Denise Manson
Headteacher	Jaki Cole
Telephone number	01375 373586
Website	www.littlethurrock.thurrock.sch.uk
Email address	admin@littlethurrock.thurrock.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 February 2015

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average primary school. It has a 52-place nursery.
- Most pupils are white British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 21 lessons. Some observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders to validate their views of the quality of teaching and pupils' current progress.
- Inspectors carried out learning walks throughout the early years provision, key stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4. An inspector carried out a further learning walk accompanied by the leader responsible for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in their books when visiting lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, two governors including the chair of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, two recently qualified teachers and two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, self-evaluation and improvement planning, minutes of governors' meetings, records of pupils' attendance and behaviour, monitoring of teaching records, and other information provided by senior leaders.
- Inspectors considered the 75 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, and the 58 free-texts received from parents. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys from 21 staff and 71 pupils.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracy Fielding	Her Majesty's Inspector
Russell Ayling	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Warboys	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Copping	Ofsted Inspector

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