

Moulsham Junior School

Princes Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 9DG

Inspection dates

24–25 April 2018

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has high expectations of pupils and staff and a clear understanding of what constitutes effective teaching and learning. Therefore, pupils' outcomes are rapidly improving.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of what the school does well and what needs to improve. The school is well placed to improve further.
- Recent appointments to the governing body have secured a diverse team, with a wide skill set, that is effective in holding the school to account.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and, consequently, pupils now make better progress in reading, writing and particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They behave well in classrooms and around the school and show respect and courtesy towards one another.
- Leaders have ensured that the broad and balanced curriculum is effective. Pupils enjoy the subjects they are taught and are motivated to learn well.
- The vast majority of parents and carers, pupils and staff are very supportive about the school. Parents agree that their children are taught well, feel safe and are happy.
- In 2017, there was a significant rise in the proportion of key stage 2 pupils achieving the expected standard and the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics. The 2017 key stage 2 pupil outcomes in these areas were above the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is improving rapidly and is now good. This is because the school uses its additional funding effectively to make a difference for these pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is as a result of the effective provision the school puts in place to support these pupils.
- Assessment and monitoring systems work well for English and mathematics and have brought rapid improvements in pupils' outcomes. However, leaders do not have similar information to judge accurately how pupils are achieving in the wider curriculum.
- Teaching is strongest in Years 4, 5 and 6 where pupils make strong progress as a result of highly effective teaching. In some Year 3 classes, the quality of teaching is inconsistent. In these cases, pupils' progress slows.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop leadership and management further by continuing to implement and develop effective assessment systems for all curriculum subjects, so that leaders know precisely how well pupils achieve across the wider curriculum, aside from English and mathematics.
- Develop teaching, learning and assessment further by:
 - sharing and learning from the good teaching practice across the school to improve teaching for pupils in all year groups
 - ensuring that support staff in lower key stage 2 receive effective professional development to enable them to meet the needs of all pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership, ably supported by her leadership team and the governors. She works very closely with a highly effective deputy headteacher to bring about significant improvements for all pupils.
- The local authority provides good support for the school through its accurate assessment of the school's strengths and areas for development. It has enabled effective support through the Chelmsford Education Network, a group of local schools that review school effectiveness at all levels.
- Since the last inspection in 2016, the headteacher has focused her attention on the achievement of pupils in reading, mathematics and writing. As a result, pupils' outcomes climbed significantly from 2016 to 2017. Parents agree, and one said, 'I have two children within the school... and can see vast improvements that have been made within the last two years.'
- The school uses its pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have successfully identified barriers to learning and plan expenditure that is now improving outcomes for pupils currently in school. For example, the weekly 'pupil premium conference' provides disadvantaged pupils with weekly one-to-one meetings with school support staff to discuss and review the learning support they require to make good progress. Annual visits to university providers by disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 have increased pupils' aspirations for higher education.
- Funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used effectively to provide help and support. The SEN coordinator monitors the use of support closely and tracks the impact it is having on pupils. Interventions and resources are well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils' needs are met and current pupils are making good progress overall. As one parent on the playground put it, 'My son has learning difficulties and the school always goes the extra mile.'
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Equality and diversity are promoted well through the school's programme of assemblies, visitors to school and educational visits for pupils, for example to Chelmsford Mosque. The curriculum leader meets with subject leaders to ensure that the school provides broad learning experiences and capitalises upon opportunities for writing and mathematics across the curriculum. Enrichment days contribute to this; for example, the Year 5 Japan topic including 'sushi tasting' and 'calligraphy day'. Parents support the view that the curriculum is broad, and one said, 'I love the opportunities my child has had.'
- Pupils are well educated about the importance of British values. Inspectors observed Year 6 pupils discussing 'who God is' in a religious education lesson. Pupils from different faith backgrounds felt confident and secure to discuss different faiths and beliefs, and all pupils demonstrated exemplary respect for their peers' views and beliefs.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is spent effectively. The PE and sport premium lead conducts regular skills audits, to identify the professional

development required by staff to develop and enhance curriculum development. Subscription to the Chelmsford Sports Partnership has increased sporting opportunities for all pupils.

- Parents spoken to during the inspection, and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, value and support the school. Parents on the playground praised school communication through systems such as the weekly newsletter. The vast majority feel that the school has improved under the headteacher's leadership and management and say, 'The school is much better now.'
- Leaders have focused effectively on raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics, leading to good improvements in pupils' outcomes in these subjects at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. Current pupils' performance in these areas is continuing to improve as a result of the effective use of pupil performance information to drive improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. For subjects other than English and mathematics, the use of pupil assessment information is not yet as effective.

Governance of the school

- Governors provide good support to school leaders. They are not afraid of challenging leaders' actions or seeking more information to assist them in their role of holding the school to account. They use their individual skills and experiences well to support the school in continuing to improve.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Their monitoring activities are core to school improvement planning. Governors hold regular review meetings on issues such as safeguarding, pupil premium performance, funding expenditure and progress for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. These meetings enable the governing body to hold the school to account accurately.
- Governors' statutory responsibilities are fully met and their work in this area is effective. They hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and learning and the impact this has on academic standards for all pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher is relentless in her pursuit of keeping pupils safe. The ethos for safeguarding is strong. Posters, handouts and flyers to prompt all adults about their safeguarding responsibilities and how to report concerns are abundant on wall displays and key entrance points to school. Staff training is up to date for how to keep pupils safe and in relation to the government's 'Prevent' duty. The headteacher's motto of, 'If in doubt, fill it out, (pink form),' is well known.
- Early identification of any concerns ensures rapid support for vulnerable pupils. The pastoral support manager and school staff work well with families, as well as with other agencies in social care and the community, to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.

- The overwhelming majority of parents, pupils and staff responding to Parent View and the staff and pupil questionnaires recognise and appreciate that the school places a high priority on maintaining pupils' safety and care.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The high expectations of the leadership team have resulted in improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school since the previous inspection. The positive impact of leaders' monitoring activities and performance management of staff is evident in the improved outcomes for pupils. The overwhelming majority of staff responding to Ofsted's staff questionnaire agreed that the school has improved since its last inspection.
- Teachers establish good relationships with pupils and ensure that the classrooms are well ordered and calm. Staff lead by example and set high standards for pupils. Skilful questioning enables teachers to identify misconceptions quickly and highlight opportunities for pupils to improve their work.
- The vast majority of learning support assistants make positive contributions to learning because they support groups of pupils appropriately. Consequently, pupils make good progress in a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive a high standard of tailored support from skilled staff. They are fully included in lessons. For example, inspectors observed pupils who have complex needs making rapid progress in their learning about analogue clock times. This was as a result of the skilful planning of resources that were well matched to the pupils' needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported to make good progress. For example, pupils are given additional reading support to enable them to make progress that is now in line with that of their peers nationally.
- Inspectors listened to groups of pupils read across the school. The vast majority of pupils are very positive about the texts they read and display a passion for reading. Pupils read texts that are well matched to their reading abilities. Their skills of inference, deduction and reading comprehension are high and pupils are able to speak at length about their reading books, demonstrating a clear understanding of what they have read. Inspectors observed the teaching of reading where the teacher's good subject knowledge enabled high-level questioning that motivated and enthused pupils to question what they were reading.
- Pupils' achievement in writing across the school is good. Writing across the curriculum is used well for pupils to write for a range of purposes and differing audiences. For example, topic work in history is linked to writing about Ancient Egypt and celebrating World Poetry Day. Pupils enjoy writing linked to the texts they study. Inspectors observed high-quality writing by the most able pupils linked to the study of 'Macbeth' in Year 5. One pupil, writing a persuasive letter to Macbeth's assassin, wrote, "Wait... I shall endeavour to never apprehend my own kind," Macbeth retorted.' Pupils' vocabulary choices and their selection of literary elements required for differing genres are highly effective as a result of teachers' skilful organisation of learning.

- The quality of mathematics teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are well supported to deepen their conceptual understanding through the use of appropriate mathematical apparatus and equipment. Pupils in Year 3 used a range of resources and 'prompt cards' effectively to classify properties of three-dimensional shapes, according to the number of vertices, edges and faces. Year 6 pupils are well challenged to justify their mathematical reasoning when solving problems. For example, when asked to explain their calculations regarding various angles, one pupil wrote, 'Opposite angles must be equal, therefore...'
- Teaching in other subject areas is motivating and well received by pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils learning about Polar regions had a good knowledge and understanding of 'landscape temperature' and 'hours of daylight'. They used subject-specific vocabulary, such as 'permafrost' and 'tundra,' effectively in their writing.
- Class teachers' support and the support given by learning support assistants are strongest in Years 4, 5 and 6. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the five Year 3 classes. Where teaching is weaker, pupils' progress is slowed and pupils' attitudes towards their learning are not so positive.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and are taught to be kind to each other and show respect for different lifestyles and opinions. Weekly assemblies focus on the core values of democracy, respect, community, tolerance, liberty, the rule of law, negotiation and teamwork. Pupils demonstrated a good understanding and application of these values in lessons, on the playground and in their discussions with inspectors.
- Through a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education, pupils receive weekly teaching that enables them to develop a good understanding of how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. Pupils are aware of online dangers, such as accessing age-restricted smartphone apps, as a result of the online safety curriculum leaders have put in place.
- Pupils told inspectors that there is very little bullying, but if it did happen, then pupils are confident that adults will sort it out quickly. Responses from the overwhelming majority of Parent View questionnaires, staff surveys and pupil surveys support the view that pupils feel safe and are well looked after.
- Leaders ensure that pupils develop a sense of responsibility through the various opportunities they provide for them to be involved in school decision making. For example, the school council has researched sugar levels in common snacks and drinks and used this to advise the school about healthy snack choices, which are on offer for pupils to purchase at breaktimes. 'Subject champions' give pupils opportunities to meet with subject leads and have input into curriculum design. The Pride of Moulsham Junior School Awards encourage and reward positive pupil attitudes towards their learning and school community.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Good behaviour is evident throughout the school due to the consistent implementation of the school's effective behaviour policy. Pupils were observed to be polite, courteous and helpful towards each other and adults throughout the inspection.
- Leaders and managers have worked hard to ensure that behaviour is good. As a result, there have been no permanent exclusions for pupils this academic year and the number of fixed-term exclusions has been significantly reduced.
- Attendance rates for all groups of pupils remain above average as a result of the approaches leaders have put in place.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' outcomes rose dramatically from 2016 to 2017. This is as a result of a key focus on monitoring and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- In 2017, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 for the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics were consistently above the national average. Pupils' progress was broadly average for reading and writing and below average in mathematics. As a result, leaders placed mathematics teaching as a key priority. Consequently, the progress that current pupils are making in reading, writing and in mathematics is good and the progress pupils are making in mathematics has risen in line with that in English.
- In 2017, too few disadvantaged pupils met national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. School leaders have acted swiftly and implemented detailed action plans to ensure that these pupils make rapid progress. Targeted support is now in place for disadvantaged pupils currently in the school. The difference between their progress and that of pupils nationally has diminished. Current assessment information illustrates that disadvantaged pupils' performance is now broadly in line with that of other pupils in the school in the amount of progress they make in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress for this group is good.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. In 2017, their progress in key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was below that of their peers nationally. As a result, governors and leaders gave high priority to improving progress for this group. Accurate monitoring and assessment of each pupil's specific needs have led to their learning being tailored to these needs. As a result, current progress for these pupils across the school has improved dramatically and is now good. Current assessment information illustrates that these pupils achieve at least in line with other pupils in the school, or outperform them in some instances, in the amount of progress they make in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Current pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics is not tracked and monitored as closely as for the core subjects. While there is some good progress across a range of subjects and classes, monitoring and assessment lack rigour. Leaders have recognised this weakness as a priority and have planned to apply the same

tracking systems already in use for English and mathematics to wider curriculum subject areas this term.

School details

Unique reference number	137971
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10046559

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	589
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Michael Klym
Headteacher	Marie Staley
Telephone number	01245 352098
Website	www.moulsham-jun.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@moulsham-jun.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 April 2016

Information about this school

- Moulsham Junior School is larger than the average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The number of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The school met the government's floor standards for 2016 and 2017. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school holds the 2015/16 School Games Gold Award and the International Schools Award.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including teachers' planning, the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, information on pupils' attainment and progress, records of behaviour and safety, records of the monitoring of teaching and management of teachers' performance, minutes of governing body meetings, and safeguarding documents.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, formally and informally, during lessons and breaktimes. The inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about books they enjoy.
- Inspectors considered the 145 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the free-text comments. The views of parents were also sought at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Stephen Cloke, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Coton	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Jude	Ofsted Inspector

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