

Perryfields Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114903
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	378953
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Elson
Headteacher	Doretta Cowie
Date of previous school inspection	2 Jul 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who visited 20 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Inspectors spoke with staff, parents and carers, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, attendance records, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring records, school planning and risk assessments. They also analysed the questionnaires received from 101 pupils, 24 staff, and 130 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What are the key factors that have contributed to the high standards attained at this school?
- Are the high standards attained in English and mathematics matched by other pupil outcomes?
- How are pupils with additional learning needs helped to make progress?

Information about the school

The number on roll is similar to that of an average-size primary school. The great majority of pupils are White British, with around one in eight coming from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion learning English as an additional language is below average; only a very small number are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although, of these, an above-average proportion have statements of special educational needs. The school has an Activemark award and enhanced Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. It is popular with parents and carers. One typified the views of many in writing, 'Perryfields Junior is a fantastic school. It is always striving for the best for its pupils and wider community. My children are flourishing here and really enjoy everything about school life.'

Key to this school's success, are the headteacher's high expectations that are shared by the governing body, all of those with leadership roles and by the entire staff. In turn, pupils eagerly rise to the challenges set for them. This has resulted in consistently high attainment academically and in pupils' personal development, preparing them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education. Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is outstanding, and they demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Their contribution to the school and wider community is exceptional, and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary in the great majority of lessons.

Teaching and learning are good, and this matches the progress that pupils make in lessons. In some classes, teaching and progress are outstanding. Much emphasis is placed on developing pupils as independent learners, at home and at school, drawing particularly on their information and communication technology (ICT) skills for research and to deepen understanding. Most lessons are well paced so that pupils get a lot done in the time available but, in a small minority of lessons, pace slows when teachers' introductions go on for too long. Teaching assistants, who are very effective working with individuals and groups who need extra help with their learning, are sometimes under-utilised during these lengthy lesson introductions.

A notable strength of teaching at Perryfield Junior is the use of assessment and targets. This was raised as a point for improvement in the last inspection but it is now one of the school's many outstanding features. What stands out about it is the consistently high standard of marking throughout the school, giving all pupils very clear guidance on how to improve their work. This is coupled with a strong focus on individual targets, which pupils know, understand and routinely do their best to achieve. In addition, self- and peer-assessment are very well established across the school, with pupils regularly checking their own and each other's work to identify what has been done well and where there is scope for improvement. The sharing by the teacher of 'success criteria' at the start of each lesson contributes to pupils' continuous assessment of their progress, although leaders' monitoring has identified that there are just occasionally lessons where pupils are unclear about what they

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should be learning. This is the case where the 'learning objectives' set out at the start of the lesson outline the task to be completed rather than what it is that pupils should be learning.

This is not a school where success in English and mathematics has come at the expense of other subjects. On the contrary, exceptionally well-developed cross-curricular links have enabled pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through learning across the curriculum. Pupils are enthused by the themes they study. Year 3 parents confirmed how the Second World War theme had captured their children's imagination, triggering thoughtful writing and linking work on healthy diets to pupils' study of wartime rationing. The curriculum is enriched through a very wide variety of clubs, in which a very high proportion of pupils take part. The outstanding provision for pupils' care, guidance and support results in high rates of attendance. It is also evident in the success of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the small number at an early stage of learning English. These pupils are helped to make exceptional progress because staff identify and set out for them small manageable steps to carefully advance their learning.

Improvement since the last inspection has been impressive because almost every aspect previously judged good is now outstanding. Leaders have an accurate picture of the school and this, coupled with their track record of better provision and raised attainment, show this school's excellent capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching and pupils' rate of progress by ensuring that in all lessons:
 - teachers' introductions do not go on for too long
 - teaching assistants are given an active role during whole-class teaching
 - learning objectives are sharply focused on what the pupils are expected to learn.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils join the school with attainment in reading, writing and mathematics that is above average. Boys and girls from all backgrounds make good progress through their time in Years 3 to 6, attaining high standards in the Year 6 national tests. In 2011, for example, almost all the pupils in Year 6 attained the nationally expected Level 4 in English and mathematics, and more than half attained the higher Level 5. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make even better progress than their peers, albeit from sometimes very low starting points. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals also do exceptionally well in this highly inclusive school. Pupils of all abilities respond enthusiastically to the school's well-developed system of rewards and commendations. They are eager to earn 'pupil of the week' awards, which are especially valued because pupils know that these are not given out lightly

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or for merely mediocre work. Every opportunity is taken to extend and reinforce pupils’ learning so that, for example, having commended a boy in assembly for having been ‘tenacious’, the headteacher paused to check that pupils understood this word and could offer an appropriate synonym.

A motto in the school hall proclaims that pupils are ‘learning to learn through taking responsibility’. That is given reality both through teachers’ consistent encouragement of independent learning and peer-assessment, and through the numerous opportunities pupils have to take on responsibilities within and beyond the school. Pupils’ mentoring roles, for example, take them into the neighbouring infant school to help younger children with their reading. Pupils’ demonstrate an impressive understanding of how to keep safe, including when using the internet. Very high participation rates in physical activities that range across sports as diverse as football and fencing show pupils’ excellent commitment to exercise that supplements their already healthy diets. Pupils treat each other with unfailing courtesy and respect, typifying their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They enthusiastically raise funds for national and international charities and their horizons have been raised through the opportunity to correspond with pupils in schools in Spain and Papua New Guinea.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Although some satisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection and are occasionally identified by leaders in their monitoring of provision, the large majority

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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of lessons are good. Several lessons were seen where teaching and pupils' learning were outstanding. Teaching is good overall because teachers have mostly high expectations of what the pupils can do. Lessons are well planned, with work that is carefully matched to pupils' different capabilities, especially in English and mathematics. Classes are managed well and, when teachers pose questions, pupils are eager to have a go at answering. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes because they know that that is how they learn to improve. They are diligent in checking their own and each other's work, and in following up points for development raised by teachers when they mark their books. Often, pupils write a brief response to teachers' marking which at least confirms they have taken note of the point raised and which, in some cases, develops into an ongoing dialogue. Very clear guidance to parents and carers, for example, on reading, equips them with appropriate learning strategies to support their children's learning at home.

This school is very well resourced. ICT facilities, for example, include a suite large enough for an entire class to be taught there together, with each pupil having access to a separate computer. These facilities also reflect the school's rigour in ensuring pupils' welfare, with appropriate seating to maintain comfort and proper posture when using a keyboard. Pupils enjoy the stimulating topics they cover through the 'themed curriculum', as well as imaginative links with popular culture through initiatives such as 'maths in the movies', drawing inspiration from the *Toy Story* films in developing pupils' understanding of shape, coordinates and other mathematical concepts. Thanks, in part, to timelines displayed in most classrooms, pupils have a rather better chronological understanding of history than seen in many other schools. From cross-stitch to cross-country, the range of extra-curricular clubs on offer is impressive. An innovation at this school is the early raising of pupils' awareness of potential career paths and, through this, pupils' aspirations, as parents and carers are invited into school to talk about their jobs.

Parents and carers are especially appreciative of the arrangements for their children's welfare. As one explained, 'My son struggles with the "changes" at the start of every school year...but I could not have asked for better support, help and advice, both from his teachers and the headteacher. They have all been brilliant.' Another parent wrote to praise staff, including those in the kitchen, for 'going the extra mile' to cater for her son's food allergies: 'They will always make something just for him without any fuss and adapt recipes so that he can eat the same as everyone else.' A feature that particularly stands out about provision at this school is the support given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements because of complex learning needs. The precise targets tailored to the specific needs of each of these pupils ensures that one-to-one support, and that provided in lessons, are sharply focused and helps them to make impressive progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching

2

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Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Despite this school's success, there is no hint of complacency among the leadership team. All share the headteacher's unrelenting drive for further improvement. The tracking of pupils' progress and the analysis of where it can be accelerated for individuals or identifiable groups are rigorous. This results in exceptionally effective promotion of equality of opportunity, with pupils from all backgrounds attaining high standards. It also results in ambitious target-setting, higher than that expected for the top 25% of similar schools. In 2011, those highly ambitious targets were surpassed. Leaders' monitoring of lessons is predicated on the same high expectations. The definition set by leaders for grading lessons is more rigorous than seen in most schools, with teachers given a clear steer as to limiting characteristics that, if observed in a lesson, would automatically make it inadequate. Leaders' observations have a commendable focus on the progress pupils make, as opposed to the notional features of good teaching, but leaders sometimes forget to date their lesson observations, making it difficult for them or other colleagues to subsequently track improvements.

Governance is outstanding. Through its members' regular, often focused, visits, the governing body ensures it is not just dependent on the headteacher and staff for its view of how well the school is doing. It regularly surveys the views of pupils, parents and carers, and ensures these are reflected in the school's development planning. It ensures that the school's work to tackle discrimination is highly effective and is especially rigorous in ensuring the high quality of the arrangements for safeguarding pupils. Procedures go way beyond meeting basic requirements, particularly in their involvement of pupils in considering risk and understanding the need for vigilance. Pupils found it particularly salutary to have demonstrated to them how easy it was for an adult to seek to befriend them over the internet by pretending to be another child on a social networking site. Members of the governing body link with their counterparts in the neighbouring infant and secondary schools to observe and report on lessons in specific subjects across the three schools in order to better ensure curriculum continuity and identify opportunities for sharing resources and expertise. There are very strong ties with the local community, including local businesses, and the school has built contacts with schools abroad. Residential trips take pupils to other parts of the United Kingdom, but there are few other structured opportunities for pupils to learn directly about the different experiences of life in, for example, Britain's inner cities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Around half the parents and carers returned questionnaires and this is higher than usual. They express overwhelmingly positive views about the school. There is particular praise for the support provided for pupils' welfare and the stimulating curriculum that helps their personal as well as their academic development. A small number of parents and carers raised queries over the management of behaviour, but inspectors saw exemplary behaviour in the great majority of lessons and around the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Perryfields Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 130 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 265 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	81	62	47	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	90	69	39	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	62	48	66	51	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	67	52	56	43	6	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	71	55	56	43	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	62	48	63	48	5	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	72	55	58	45	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	77	59	51	39	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	61	47	64	49	5	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	44	66	51	6	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	55	42	71	55	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	79	61	50	38	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	78	60	50	38	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 8 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Perryfields Junior School, Chelmsford, CM1 7PP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Perryfields Junior is an outstanding school where your achievement and personal development are excellent and where you are helped to attain consistently high standards. We were impressed by your exemplary behaviour in lessons and around the school. Your very positive attitudes to learning are helping you to achieve so very well. We were also pleased to see such high rates of attendance.

You make good progress overall because you benefit from good teaching. In some classes the teaching is outstanding. We have suggested some ways in which you can be helped to make outstanding progress in even more lessons. Those of you who need extra help with your learning already make exceptional progress. This is because the school provides such high quality care, guidance and support.

Several of you told us how much you enjoy the 'themes' that bring your literacy, numeracy and ICT skills together with subjects such as science, history and geography. One of the reasons that you do so well is because teachers succeed in making your learning interesting, relevant and fun.

Your school has improved considerably since its last inspection. This is because the headteacher's drive and ambition for you all to do well are shared by the entire staff and the governing body. Staff all have a very clear picture of how each of you is doing and of what you need to do to improve. They give you lots of help through marking and through your targets. You can help to make your progress even faster by always reading the comments teachers write when they mark your work and by always doing your best to follow their advice.

Thank you again for being so helpful on our visit, and our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward
Lead inspector

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