

# Inspection of a good school: John Ray Infant School

Notley Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 1HL

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Inspection dates:

13–14 November 2019

## **Outcome**

John Ray Infant School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils love coming to school and say it is a fun and happy place to learn. They show respect for each other and follow the school's code of conduct – being kind, responsible and safe. This means that John Ray Infant School is a calm and safe place to be.

In lessons, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and behave very well. Adults quickly and effectively deal with any unkind behaviour. Pupils trust adults to keep them safe and look after them in school.

During playtime and lunchtime, pupils all play together. They mix with pupils in other classes and use the wide range of equipment on offer safely and responsibly. Behaviour in the playground is as good as it is in class.

Adults in the school want the best for every single child. They make sure they look after pupils' emotional well-being, so pupils are ready to learn. In lessons, teachers make learning interesting and encourage pupils to think hard.

Pupils learn important knowledge and skills in many subjects in the curriculum. Along with this, they learn more about their local area and how they can make it a better place. For example, pupils recently worked with the local council to do a litter pick in the streets around the school.

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

Leaders have thought hard about the curriculum. There are clear plans in place to show what pupils need to know in each subject by the end of each term. These plans also make sure that teachers devise lessons that build on what pupils already know. This means pupils remember more about different subjects as they move through the school. In design and technology, for example, pupils in Year 2 have well-developed cutting skills because these are systematically taught in every year group.

Pupils learn the basic skills they need in mathematics from the very start of their time in school. They are taught to 'justify' and 'prove' their mathematical thinking. As they move through the school, pupils develop a good understanding of number. They can carry out calculations in their head quickly and correctly. Leaders have put in place a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics, which means that pupils progress well.

Leaders give reading a high priority. They regularly look at how they teach reading and phonics, making changes to improve things if needed.

Teachers promote a real love of reading in most pupils. Pupils chosen as 'reading champions' are proud of this and they take a special book home to share with their family. Teachers read stories to classes every single day. Pupils thoroughly enjoy hearing these stories and teachers take every opportunity to talk about new words that appear in the story.

A small number of pupils in Year 1 who find reading hard do not progress as quickly as they should. They do not get enough chances to practise reading because the books they take home to read do not match the new sounds they learn in class. Leaders have introduced a new approach to teaching phonics to help these pupils. However, some adults have not received enough training in this, so do not always know how to help pupils who find it hard to catch up in reading quickly.

In Reception, children settle quickly. Activities for learning phonics are well planned. This means that once they are in school, children begin to learn to read quickly. Children develop their mathematical knowledge well because adults are skilled at asking questions to make them think hard. Adults provide a good range of activities for children to improve their physical skills. For instance, many children are skilled at using scissors to cut out tricky shapes because they are taught to do this from the start of school. Children are well prepared to move into Year 1.

There are lots of clubs that pupils can attend. These include many sports clubs, along with clubs for cooking, choir and gardening. Some pupils are able to attend more than one club a week, which they love doing. Pupils are well aware of the differences between themselves and others in school. They learn about the beliefs of people from different religions. Pupils who are voted onto the school council are rightly proud of their work to redesign the layout of the playground. This means that all pupils can now choose from a range of new equipment to use at playtime.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. They have access to the full curriculum. Adults who work with pupils with SEND are well trained and help pupils to be independent.

Governors involve themselves in the life of the school and carry out their roles effectively. They ask questions of leaders to check they are doing the right things for pupils. Governors make sure that pupils are learning and behaving well.

Staff appreciate the support senior leaders give them. Leaders take full account of staff workload when making changes to the way the school works. Teachers are positive about

the professional development opportunities leaders give them to help further improve their work.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out all required checks and vetting procedures on new staff thoroughly. The designated safeguarding leaders make sure that all staff are well trained. Adults know what to do if they have a concern about a child. They are vigilant and record any concerns they have. Leaders work well with outside agencies to support pupils who need help. They are not afraid to challenge these agencies if they do not get the right help for a pupil.

Pupils, parents and carers, and staff all say that bullying is rare. If it does happen, adults dealt with it well. Pupils feel safe in school.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The books that some of the lowest attaining pupils read do not closely match the new phonics work they complete in school. Consequently, they do not have enough opportunity to practise what they are taught. Their reading lacks accuracy and fluency and they do not catch up as quickly as they should do. Leaders need to ensure that these pupils have reading books that are more closely matched to the phonic knowledge pupils are currently learning so they are helped to catch up more quickly.
- The new approach to the teaching of phonics is still in the early stages of implementation. Some adults have received training. However, not all adults who teach phonics have been trained to the same high standard. Some do not have the knowledge and skills to deliver high-quality phonics lessons to pupils, especially to those who need help to catch up quickly. Leaders must make sure that all adults who teach phonics receive the same high-quality training.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2010.

## **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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114941
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110288
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	310
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Penny Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kate Mills
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.johnrayinfants.com">www.johnrayinfants.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 March 2016

## Information about this school

- The school currently has four classes in each year group.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school clubs.

## Information about this inspection

- I held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders and a range of other staff. I met with four governors, including the chair of governors. I also met with the school's improvement partner and local authority adviser.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, and design and technology. In each subject, I met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, met with groups of pupils, scrutinised pupils' work and held a discussion with teachers. In addition, I spoke with pupils and staff about other aspects of the school, heard a group of pupils read and spoke with them about their reading books.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, I reviewed school policies, documents and records. A meeting was held with the designated safeguarding leaders to consider

how well they work to keep pupils safe. Additionally, I spoke with pupils, staff and parents about how safe pupils are at school.

- I took into account the 49 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, and 27 free-text responses. I considered 32 responses to the online staff survey. No pupils completed Ofsted’s survey of their views.

### **Inspection team**

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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