

Monkwick Junior School

School Road, Colchester, Essex CO2 8NN

Inspection dates

17–18 July 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In 2017, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was well below national averages. Progress for these pupils was in the lowest 10% nationally in reading and writing.
- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching across the school. Too few pupils make the progress they should. The proportion of pupils who attain the higher standard across the school, who, at key stage 1, were identified as middle- and higher attaining pupils and those who are disadvantaged, is low.
- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low, and planned work does not allow all pupils to make strong progress.
- The school offers a broad curriculum, but it is not well balanced. Progress that pupils make in subjects such as history, geography and science is limited.
- The school's plans for improvement are not sharply focused on improving pupils' outcomes.
- Many subject leaders are new to their roles. They show promise, but their work is still at an early stage. The impact of their actions to improve pupils' progress is not yet evident in writing and particularly in mathematics.
- Members of the new governing body are beginning to challenge leaders about pupils' outcomes. However, they have not checked carefully enough on the outcomes of those pupils who are disadvantaged.
- Plans to share the most effective teaching within the school to improve less effective practice are at an early stage.
- Early indications show that pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2018 have achieved better than last year. However, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have not climbed rapidly enough since the school became an academy.

The school has the following strengths

- Since her arrival, the new headteacher has worked hard with her new team and the trust to restore the confidence of parents and carers in the school. Everyone is united and keen to improve the school further.
- Leadership of special educational needs (SEN) is very effective. Pupils' needs are well met.
- The behaviour and conduct of pupils are good. Pupils say they are happy and safe and enjoy coming to school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good, by ensuring that:
 - teachers have the highest expectations of all pupils, including those who are middle- and higher attaining pupils and those who are disadvantaged
 - teachers plan learning that takes into account pupils' individual starting points
 - pupils are routinely offered appropriate challenge so that they make as much progress as they can, particularly those who are most able
 - the proportion of pupils who achieve as well as they can in mathematics rapidly increases throughout the school
 - teachers regularly plan opportunities for pupils to practise their basic English and mathematical skills in subjects such as history, geography and science
 - teachers plan work that builds on pupils' prior knowledge and that covers the whole of the national curriculum.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - the school's plans for improvement focus sharply on pupils' outcomes, with clear, measurable targets for improvement
 - the role of subject leaders is consistently effective, so that they have a greater impact on the progress and attainment of pupils in the subjects they lead
 - leaders keep a close eye on the balance of the curriculum offered to pupils across the school
 - leaders effectively use the pockets of good practice that exist within the school and the trust to develop teachers' skills and improve pupils' achievement
 - governors rigorously hold leaders to account for the use of additional funding to support the progress of pupils who are disadvantaged.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the school became an academy with this trust in September 2016, there has been a complete change in the leadership of the school. Over half of the staff have also changed. A new leadership team, which includes a substantive headteacher and deputy headteacher, took up position in September 2017. Although much has been done to improve the school in the last year, there has not been enough time for leaders to see the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes.
- The school development plan covers most of the school's priorities for improvement, although not all. It also lacks detailed, clear, measurable targets of how actions will have an impact on pupils' progress. This makes it more difficult for the new governing body and senior leaders to monitor the progress that the school is making towards achieving its goals. Although some improvements have clearly been made in such areas as behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning, these successes are not well charted and, therefore, not celebrated as much as they could be.
- Leadership of English and SEN is strong. Leaders are beginning to make a valuable contribution to improving teaching since their appointment in 2017. For example, a more structured approach to reading has ensured that pupils' achievement is improving across the school. The two new leaders are effective role models for less-experienced members of staff, all of whom have subjects to lead. However, these other subject leaders do not have an accurate view of whether the decisions they make have had an impact on pupils' learning.
- The curriculum is not as well developed as it should be. Teachers plan learning in areas such as art, science, history and geography. For example, a range of artists has been studied and pupils try to use similar techniques as these artists in their own artwork. Similarly, in history and physical education (PE), the contrast between the modern and ancient Olympics was studied in Year 6. However, the depth and breadth of the learning are often limited. Pupils' prior knowledge, understanding and skills are not used well enough to ensure that they make strong progress. Arrangements to check the quality of teaching and learning in subjects such as geography, religious education (RE), history and science are not embedded.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and is a strength of the school. Relationships between the staff and pupils are strong. Staff provide effective role models for pupils. Leaders are keen to ensure that pupils have a 'can-do' attitude to their learning. An innovative approach has been introduced to encourage pupils to tackle new skills and to experience what this feels like. For example, they have experienced knitting, learning sign language, using a compass, or learning to juggle. 'If you keep trying, you can do anything,' said one pupil.
- Governors hold leaders to account for the use of additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Through the work of the governor with specific responsibility for SEN, the governing body and trust are kept apprised of the progress pupils make and the provision they receive. The SEN governor meets with the leader of SEN, where examples such as pupils' 'brilliance books' are shared. Despite being in post for a short period of time, this leader knows the pupils well, ensures that the support they receive

addresses their often complex needs, and checks carefully to see that they are making progress.

- Where teaching is most effective, pupils make good progress, including those who are most able. However, too few disadvantaged pupils across the school make the progress of which they are capable. The governing body has not monitored and challenged leaders sufficiently about the impact that additional funding has on all disadvantaged pupils.
- Innovative use has been made of the PE and sport premium funding. The sports coach has improved teachers' confidence in the delivery of the PE curriculum. This will continue in the autumn, when all teachers will have access to the primary teachers' award run by the Football Association. A new netball court is due to be marked out on the playground to extend the range of sports offered. Leaders report on increased outcomes for pupils who come to sports clubs. The focus for the coming year is on increasing the proportion of pupils who can swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6.
- In the last two years, the school has been through a period of significant change and instability. The current headteacher was appointed in 2017 and has re-established the confidence of most parents and the community. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of leaders and the school. Those who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, said that they would recommend the school to others. As one parent commented, 'The new management team has brought in a lot of positive changes which I find benefit the parents as well as the pupils.'
- Since the trust became involved with the school in September 2016, members of the trust have worked very closely with the community, other schools and other local multi-academy trusts. As a result, there has been a complete overhaul of policies and practice, particularly in behaviour, governance and the quality of teaching. In this relatively short period of time, trust members have not shied away from making some difficult decisions. Support has been garnered from a variety of people and places. Leaders are now in a stronger position to address the school's existing and emerging priorities, some of which have already been identified.

Governance of the school

- There have been significant, positive changes to the composition of the governing body since September 2016. Many governors are new to their roles and are being well supported by the trust.
- The considerable challenges that the new school has faced since September 2016 have been tackled effectively by the trust. It has successfully recruited a completely new leadership team and filled many staff vacancies. It has also made effective links with other local schools and trusts to ensure that there are lasting relationships, with growing professional development opportunities.
- Governors have worked closely with the headteacher, overseeing the considerable work that has been undertaken since she took up her position in the school. They know that the school is on a journey from a very low starting point and have the highest aspirations for the pupils in the school and community.

- Governors are developing their ability to challenge school leaders in relation to pupils' attainment and progress. They ask leaders pertinent questions based on the information the headteacher provides them with. Checking on the use of additional funding to support improvement in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils is not as rigorous as it needs to be.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are aware that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and use the school's developing systems effectively. They are appropriately trained, including in the 'Prevent' duty, and understand the procedures to follow should they have a concern about a pupil's welfare.
- The school supports vulnerable families very well. The new pastoral team and leader of SEN work well with parents and families and ensure that appropriate support is identified. The vast majority of parents recognise the lengths that staff go to in order to ensure that pupils come to school regularly and feel successful in their learning.
- Child protection and safeguarding records are well maintained and comprehensively chart the actions that have been taken with external agencies.
- There are comprehensive procedures in place for the recruitment and selection of staff. Pupils' safety is assured, because no new member of staff can start working at the school until all appropriate checks have been completed.
- Parents are confident that their children are safe and happy at school. They value the significant contribution that the headteacher has made during the last year. As one parent said, 'Over the last year, I believe the school's new leadership team has worked hard to rebuild relationships with parents.' Another commented, 'We feel the school is a safe and nurturing environment and we are very happy with our son's progress as well as his increased confidence.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is uneven across the school, between year groups and between classes within year groups. This has resulted in some pupils not making the progress of which they are capable, from their starting points, in most subjects. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement.
- In some classes, teachers interrupt the flow of pupils' work because they spend too long explaining what pupils need to do. As a result, pupils are not given sufficient time to think about their learning or to deepen their thinking. The quality of work is not as good as it could be. Consequently, too few pupils across the school achieve as well as they can in writing and particularly in mathematics. Where teaching is most effective, pupils are given opportunities to extend their learning. Teachers ask probing questions to encourage pupils to think hard about what they are learning and to discuss their learning with their classmates. Nevertheless, still too few pupils reach the higher standards in their work.

- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Work that teachers plan does not meet the needs of the pupils. It is either too easy or too hard. As seen in books during the inspection, too often pupils of different abilities do the same work. As a result, progress is too weak and not consistently strong, particularly in mathematics.
- In the wider curriculum, some subjects are not taught in sufficient depth or regularly enough. Evidence seen in 'curriculum books' showed that work was minimal and was often the same regardless of pupils' abilities. Teachers do not provide a rich skills- and knowledge-based curriculum in subjects such as science, geography and history. Where individual teachers have a particular interest, subject knowledge is strong and teaching effective. However, pupils are not offered the same opportunities throughout the school within a curriculum that builds on their previous skills, knowledge and understanding. Leaders are aware that this is something that needs addressing quickly, and have already included it in their school development plan for the next academic year.
- Recent initiatives and the swift action taken by the leaders of English are improving the quality of teaching in reading across the school. The subject lead for English has introduced whole-class reading, using newly purchased, good-quality texts. It is evident in some reading lessons that pupils are interested readers who can talk animatedly about their favourite authors. As one pupil said, 'I love this author. It makes me want to read all of the books in this series.' Pupils write for a variety of purposes and without reticence. Some teachers, however, do not plan learning that enables pupils to practise their basic English skills in other subjects. Where teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to write, their writing stamina is clearly improving. Writing is well developed, and pupils use the techniques of well-known authors in their writing. For example, in one class, pupils discussed personification with examples such as 'The famished waves devoured the ship' being typical of pupils' responses.
- Owing to historical poor teaching of mathematics, there are considerable gaps in pupils' learning and they are still trying to catch up. In some classes, too much work is planned that does not take into account pupils' starting points. As a result, some pupils find the work easy and make little progress. Others do not understand what they are supposed to do or how to do it and therefore make little if any progress, as seen during the inspection. Pupils are left confused, with some not able to read what they have been given. Despite there being a range of 'challenges' for pupils to select from, teachers do not keep a close enough eye on whether pupils' choices are appropriate or not. As a result, opportunities for pupils to deepen their reasoning skills, for example, are limited. Opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical skills in subjects such as science, history and geography are also limited.
- Learning support assistants are well deployed. They work closely with class teachers and the leader of SEN to support pupils in their learning. During the inspection, many pupils were very effectively supported to enable them to make progress from their starting points. Staff focused pupils with sensitive questions or by reminding them what they already know and what they can do to help them to be successful in their learning. Pupils say that this is very helpful to them.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive and supportive. Pupils are confident to share any worries or concerns that they have with their headteacher, other members of staff, or a friend.
- Pupils who spoke with the inspector said that theirs is an 'amazing, friendly and happy school'. They are keen to learn and know that they learn from making mistakes.
- Pupils have a good awareness that 'when someone picks on you over and over again', it is bullying behaviour. They know the various forms that bullying can take. Pupils say that there is sometimes a little bit of bullying at the school but that adults largely deal with incidents quickly.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of how to stay safe when using the computer. They know that they should not tell anyone their passwords. They also know not to give out personal information and never to accept invitations from people they do not know.
- Pupils enjoy being given responsibilities, for example as members of the school council. They understand the importance of being in a position where they are able to make decisions about the school. For example, they reported back to leaders that more play equipment was needed in the playground to ensure that pupils were active.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around school. They are polite, well mannered and respectful of each other and adults.
- Pupils understand well the colour-related school behaviour system. They want to be seen to be doing the right thing. Pupils quote the school's phrase, 'Let's be keen to stay on green and be together as part of a team.'
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons, despite some times when learning is not well matched to their needs. They show 'resilience and keep trying', which is one of the school's aims.
- Pupils conduct themselves well during break- and lunchtimes, playing with others, taking turns on play equipment or just chatting over their lunch. The variety of play equipment and the extensive field allow pupils to develop skills and to play team games amicably together.
- Some pupils have not attended school as regularly as they should. Persistent absence of a small group of pupils has been above the national average for the last two years. Leaders work closely with families to ensure that they understand the impact that irregular attendance can have on their children's learning and progress. As a

consequence, there has been a marked improvement in this area for some of the school's most vulnerable pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The published results at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 showed that the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average at only 34%. Progress in reading and writing was significantly below average and in the lowest 10% of schools nationally, while in mathematics, progress was below average. The progress of middle-attaining pupils and those who are disadvantaged was particularly poor.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard in reading, writing or mathematics, was below the national average. Some previously identified high-attaining pupils at key stage 1 did not make the progress that was expected of them. This included pupils who are disadvantaged.
- Early indications of results at the end of Year 6 in 2018 are better. This includes the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher standards in reading and writing. However, mathematics lags behind.
- The school's own assessment information, work in pupils' books and learning seen during the inspection confirm that current pupils across the school do not make consistently strong progress in writing and particularly in mathematics. In a minority of year groups, teachers ensure that learning matches the needs of pupils and challenges them to think hard about their work. As a result, pupils' progress in these classes is stronger.
- The emphasis that leaders put on improving reading outcomes during the last year has paid off. Progress of pupils in reading, including those who are disadvantaged or most able, is strong. Pupils say they enjoy reading. As one pupil commented, 'You can get carried away using your imagination.' Another pupil who said he enjoyed reading Tom Gates' books commented, 'His books always make me laugh. I never get bored of them.'
- The progress of the majority of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is strong. The SEN leader works closely with teachers to ensure that learning support assistants help pupils to be successful in their work. The school's own information evidences progress that pupils have made against their individual targets and also in national curriculum subjects. Although writing progress is weaker, some individual pupils have made great strides in their attitude to learning and their willingness to try hard.
- Disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 did not achieve as well as all other pupils nationally. The school's own assessment information shows that outcomes of disadvantaged pupils across the school show some pockets of improvement. Their achievement is similar to that of their classmates, taking into consideration their various starting points. However, many disadvantaged pupils do not make as much progress as they might, especially those who are most able.
- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in subjects such as history, religious education, science and geography. Teachers do not plan regular opportunities for pupils to practise their basic English and mathematical skills in these subjects. Work in

pupils' 'curriculum books' is limited and often of poor quality. This is an important area of the school's works that requires considerable improvement.

School details

Unique reference number	145020
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10046654

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

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	257
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Sandy Tate
Headteacher	Rebecca McCutcheon
Telephone number	01206 575399
Website	www.monkwickjunior.co.uk
Email address	admin@monkwick-jun.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized junior school.
- The school became part of the SIGMA trust in September 2016. The trust put in place an improvement board for governance. After a period of shadowing the improvement board, a local governing body was appointed recently. This body oversees the work of Monkwick Junior School and the neighbouring infant school and is accountable to the trustees.
- A new headteacher started at the school in September 2017, along with a new deputy headteacher. Two assistant headteachers have also been recruited to the school within the last year.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, or who have an education, health and care plan, is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.

- Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. Some current pupils are learning English as an additional language.
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2017, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes, often with a member of the leadership team, spoke to pupils about their learning, and looked at work in pupils' books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the leaders of SEN, English and mathematics, the chief executive officer, the primary school improvement lead for the trust, and governors.
- The lead inspector talked to a group of pupils to ascertain their views of the school. At the request of the headteacher, two members of staff had a meeting with the lead inspector to express their views of the school.
- An inspector listened to pupils read. A range of work in pupils' books was scrutinised with the leaders of English and mathematics, and inspectors viewed work on display around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to parents in the school playground at the start of the school day and scrutinised the school's own parent survey.
- A wide range of documentation was considered during the inspection, including that relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance, the school development plans and the assessment information on the progress of current pupils in the school.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 23 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, parents' free-text responses and correspondence from parents. The responses of 22 pupils and 20 members of staff were also considered by the lead inspector.

Inspection team

Ruth Brock, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gay Whent	Ofsted Inspector
Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop	Her Majesty's Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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