

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: John Ray Junior School

Notley Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 1HL

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 March 2025

Outcome

John Ray Junior School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Karen Harrison. The school is part of the Compass Partnership of Schools, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), John Camp, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Susan Skidmore. There is also an executive headteacher, Michelle Bernard, who is responsible for this school and three others.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a kind and welcoming school. Pupils' behaviour reflects the high expectations set by school staff. As such, pupils have the school's 'three rights' fulfilled, to be safe and feel safe, to learn and to have respect.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. They love their lessons and are very attentive throughout. The school aspires for every pupil to achieve their very best. As a result, pupils achieve well in most subjects.

Pupils have many experiences that enhance their learning. These include a visit to an indoor planetarium and a Stone Age day. The school's rich array of experiences, such as live music, theatre and singing in national events, broaden pupils' horizons and help develop their talents and interests. Pupils also take part in numerous sporting activities as well as clubs such as yoga, martial arts and drawing. These activities help pupils extend their talents and interests.

All pupils have the chance to take on meaningful leadership roles. These roles include playground buddies, well-being counsellors, school councillors, head ambassadors and eco-team members. These roles enable pupils to play a purposeful role in the school community. Pupils are extremely proud to take on these responsibilities.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that sets high aspirations and expectations for all pupils. It aims to support pupils in being confident, independent and inquisitive. The school sets out the important knowledge that pupils will learn from year to year in each subject.

In many subjects, teachers provide well-considered activities that help pupils to remember this knowledge. Teachers check pupils' learning regularly to ensure pupils can apply what they have learned. This helps pupils make meaningful connections between subjects and with what they have learned before. Pupils' knowledge builds successfully over time in many subjects. As a result, pupils achieve well overall.

Pupils benefit from the school's consistent approach to learning. However, in some subjects, learning activities sometimes do not enable pupils to deepen and extend their learning. This means some pupils do not move on to learning and applying more complex knowledge as quickly as they can. This slows these pupils' progress through the curriculum.

The school makes sure that all pupils have the reading skills they need to access the curriculum. Pupils at an early stage of learning to read receive effective support. They quickly develop fluency, accuracy and confidence when reading.

The school's support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is a strength. The school accurately identifies pupils' individual needs and provides effective support where needed. Staff are equally ambitious about what pupils with SEND can achieve. They adapt teaching skilfully, enabling pupils with SEND to succeed in their learning.

The school prepares pupils to be respectful citizens. Pupils learn about diversity. They celebrate and learn about different cultural festivals, such as Diwali. Pupils debate news topics and moral and ethical issues. As a result, pupils are highly respectful of difference.

Pupils learn about democracy through curriculum topics and voting for pupil leaders. These leadership roles are purposeful. For example, playground buddies help younger pupils to settle in. The well-being ambassadors have training to help them support others. Pupils support the local community. They conduct litter picking, attend church services and complete fundraising activities.

Staff value the opportunities they have to develop their expertise and subject knowledge. This helps to improve their teaching further. Staff feel very well supported by leaders with their workload and well-being.

The trust has detailed oversight of the school's work. It identifies accurately the priorities for further development. The trust checks that these are being achieved. It provides the support and challenge needed to help make the school even better.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teachers do not help pupils deepen their understanding of some of the more complex knowledge and content pupils need to learn. As a result, pupils do not learn, understand or use this complex knowledge and content as quickly as they could. The school should ensure that teachers help pupils develop their understanding of more complex knowledge and content across all subjects.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2020.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	143538
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10378555
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	440
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Susan Skidmore
CEO of the trust	John Camp
Headteacher	Karen Harrison
Website	www.johnray.compassps.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 March 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The school manages a breakfast club.
- The school joined the Compass Partnership of Schools in September 2022.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central

record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- The inspector met with representatives from the trust, including the CEO and the chair of the board of trustees, as well as members of the local school committee.
- The inspector reviewed the school's records of behaviour and attendance and spoke with several groups of pupils to understand their experiences of school.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online pupil and staff surveys. The inspector also considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments.

Inspection team

Rowena Simmons, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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