

# Bitterne Park Junior School

Manor Farm Road, Southampton, SO18 1NX

**Inspection dates** 26–27 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>3</b>
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Bitterne Park Junior is a rapidly improving school. Since its partnership with two other schools, a range of very carefully planned changes has radically improved the overall quality of teaching and learning.
- As a result, pupils' progress has significantly improved since the last inspection. All pupils are now making at least the progress expected nationally. A very sizeable proportion makes even better progress.
- Achievement is good. In this year's unvalidated end of Year 6 national assessments, pupils reached above average standards in writing, and well above average standards in reading and mathematics from average starting points.
- Those pupils who are most disadvantaged are making particularly good progress. Any gaps in performance are rapidly being closed.
- Pupils are extremely well cared for. They feel secure and appreciated as individuals. The values of mutual respect and consideration are ingrained in a learning environment where most flourish. Pupils' behaviour is typically good and mostly outstanding.
- The executive headteacher gives an outstandingly strong direction to the work of the school. Leaders and managers share best elements across the three schools in the partnership to give the very best for pupils. Senior leaders are working cohesively to lift the quality of teaching to outstanding. They are moving towards this goal systematically and with determination.
- Parents appreciate this and the school's reputation is good, and growing.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet consistently outstanding. In a small minority of lessons the pace of learning is too slow, and opportunities for pupils to evaluate and consolidate their independent learning are missed.
- The changes in the curriculum are not completely embedded in some classes and so pupils are not always fully challenged and excited in their learning, especially those who are more able.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at one day’s notice by three additional inspectors.
- Inspectors observed 22 lessons, or parts of lessons, taught by 13 teachers, and some were joint observations with senior leaders..
- They met with groups of pupils, the chair of the interim executive board and members of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone and met with her at the feedback at the end of the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ work, including books from the last academic year, and heard pupils read from all year groups.
- Inspectors took account of the 60 responses to the on-line Parent View survey and held informal discussions with parents in the playground before school.
- They observed the school’s work, and looked at school documentation, including data on pupils’ progress, evidence of self-evaluation and monitoring records.
- Inspectors analysed questionnaire responses from 15 staff.

## Inspection team

David Marshall, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Carolyn Steer	Additional inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an above-average-sized junior school serving a suburban area of a large coastal town.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. An average number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Around a tenth of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding, this is broadly average for most primary schools.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is in line with that in most schools. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above most schools. These needs include moderate learning difficulties and speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A little under a year ago the school joined an informal partnership with two other schools in the area, under the leadership of an executive headteacher. A number of senior staff work across the three schools.

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

- Embed the improvements in the planning of the curriculum so that the quality of teaching is outstanding overall by:
  - ensuring planned activities are implemented consistently to maintain pupils' interest and concentration, so that the pace and rate of learning never slows
  - extending opportunities for pupils, especially the more able, to gain independence through applying and evaluating their learning in all subjects
  - extending opportunities for staff to observe and share the outstanding practice in the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils start school with skills, knowledge and experience that are in line with what are expected for their age. Pupils settle in quickly, get on with others, behave well and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Progress has improved, with the vast majority of pupils now reaching above average levels in Year 6. Pupils particularly enjoy literacy work, and make well above average progress in reading. A good example was in the Year 5 lessons, where descriptive writing of the personality of a character was considerably enhanced by pupils watching Tintin on the interactive whiteboard, and reading the difficult text with enthusiasm.
- One of the school's significant highlights has been the focus on those who have extra funding as part of the pupil premium, those who are disabled or have special educational needs, and those who have English as an additional language. This is a real success story as their progress has dramatically improved and gaps between the learning of such pupils and that of pupils nationally are being rapidly closed.
- Achievement in mathematics is good, with a noticeable improvement in the performance of girls reaching above average levels at the end of Year 6. Good teaching, based on good planning and the sharing of staff skills and expertise, is at the heart of this and provides a good model for raising achievement across the curriculum in all other subjects.
- The school is especially good at helping pupils whose attitudes to learning are less secure to achieve well. Inspection evidence shows that every pupil has taken the school motto of 'Aim High' to their hearts and now knows how to get better.
- Evidence, including Parent View and the school's analysis of their own parental questionnaires, indicates that this year most parents are pleased with the progress that their children are making.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good, and occasionally outstanding, particularly for the older pupils. In the most effective lessons, teachers move learning on briskly with well-focused and probing questions that keep pupils on their toes.
- This was especially evident in a series of mathematics lesson observed in the Year 6 classes. Pupils are set in these classes according to their ability, and very careful and detailed planning meets the needs of their level of achievement. In these lessons, the teachers' confident subject knowledge ensured that teaching points were clearly explained and demonstrated.
- However, learning is not yet outstanding overall because this careful attention to implementing all the agreed changes to the curriculum is not consistent across the school.
- Teachers use the plentiful assessment information to plan well-structured lessons for all classes. Very occasionally, pupils make slower progress because the objective for the lesson is not sufficiently refined to challenge different ages and capabilities.
- Teaching assistants are adept at supporting individuals and groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs or whose first language is other than English. In several lessons seen, the teacher and teaching assistant systematically circulated around the room, questioning individuals about their learning. Teachers then adjusted their teaching in light of the pupils' responses. During a Year 3 mathematics lesson, the class teacher adapted the content by creating an impromptu teaching group to maintain an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils and this resulted in good progress being made.
- Pupils use their targets and checklists to evaluate their writing very well. However, very occasionally, valuable learning opportunities are missed because pupils are not routinely asked to explain their answers.
- Reading is taught very well and accounts for pupils' good progress and rising levels of

attainment.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils behave well in and around the school. Parents, pupils and staff comment that any disruption to learning is rare. This view is consistent with inspection findings that attitudes to learning are good, and is confirmed by good rates of progress.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because there are a few pupils who misbehave when the teaching does not inspire them. If this happens they are managed particularly well. Staff have received extensive training in how to deal with these eventualities and are well supported by the behaviour management systems and by senior leaders.
- There is little evidence of bullying, and pupils show that they are aware of how to stay safe and what to do if they have problems. They are confident that there is always a member of staff to turn to and that leaders deal with situations quickly and fairly. With very few exceptions, parents share the same views.
- Attendance rates have been improved over the last two years and are now in line with the national average. Pupils arrive punctually.
- Pupils are keen to say that the school treats them fairly. First-hand observations and discussions with staff, an interim executive board member, parents and pupils indicate that the school successfully ensures there is no discrimination. In many sessions inspectors observed similar lessons taught to parallel classes across year groups. Evidence shows that pupils have equality of opportunity within the school and when compared with pupils elsewhere.
- Older pupils willingly take on roles of responsibility as house captains, monitors and members of the school council. They take their responsibilities seriously, such as supervising younger pupils using play equipment at lunchtimes.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The executive headteacher's promotion of improvements in the last year has been outstanding. As one teacher observed, 'The progress we have made has been meteoric.'
- All other leaders have gained and maintain a clear vision of where and how to improve the school during a period of substantial change. Inspection evidence confirms this vision is shared widely and all members of staff fully support what the school is trying to achieve. Expectations are articulated clearly and promote a consistent approach to teaching and the learning environment.
- The executive headteacher has a very accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning. Her perceptive observations and informative feedback punctuate the school's monitoring records. There is a high level of professional support for all staff which is linked closely to performance management in order to improve their practice. Accountability systems are strong and weaker teaching has been tackled vigorously.
- Systems to track pupils' progress, especially their reading development, are detailed and the outcomes are used widely to inform improvement planning.
- Procedures for safeguarding pupils are effective and meet current government requirements and there are robust arrangements in place for checking staff and other adults.
- The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Trips into the locality, visitors to partnership schools and residential visits provide numerous opportunities for pupils to pursue their sporting, cultural and artistic interests.
- The local authority has supported the school very effectively since the partnership was formed. Its support of this good school is now the light touch of one visit a year.
- Parents are regarded as key partners in the joint endeavour to fulfil pupils' potential. There are good channels of communication through pupils' school diaries, email, parent forums,

and meetings with staff. Most parents are positive about their level of engagement with the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the interim executive board have driven the school’s progress rapidly forward through their timely interventions and high-quality knowledge and understanding. They know the school well, because members visit regularly to monitor the school’s work.
  - The board members provide a high level of challenge to school leaders, regularly analysing the performance of pupils and monitoring improvement. These features underpin the school’s strong capacity for further improvement.
-

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupil's needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupil's needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116090
<b>Local authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	405619

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	352
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Interim Executive Board
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Tumelty
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Gerida Montague
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18–19 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	02380 554541
<b>Fax number</b>	02380 679289
<b>Email address</b>	office@bitterne-jun.southampton.sch.uk



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012

