

# Whybridge Junior School

Blacksmith's Lane, Rainham, RM13 7AH

**Inspection dates** 29–30 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points and standards are rising rapidly, especially in writing.
- The proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress compares favourably with national figures.
- Most teaching is good, with outstanding examples. Teachers know what they want pupils to learn and actively involve them so that they find lessons interesting.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and is managed consistently well by all staff. Pupils are polite and considerate towards one another.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents agree. Their above-average attendance reflects their enjoyment of school.
- Leaders and managers and governors have been successful in improving teaching and increasing achievement. The school's systems for managing the performance of staff are outstanding.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While good, pupils' achievement in reading is not as strong as it is in writing and mathematics.
- Younger pupils sometimes lack the skills they need to make the correct links between sounds and letters, and older pupils do not always fully understand what they are reading.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because the work is not always sufficiently demanding for all pupils.
- Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to respond to teachers' marking or act upon the advice in their books.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were joint observations with the headteacher. All teachers and support staff in school were seen working with the pupils.
- Inspectors also heard pupils read, attended assemblies and undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, local authority reports on the school, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, class teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the 30 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), spoke individually with several parents during the course of the inspection and examined the results of the school's own questionnaire to parents.
- Inspectors also considered the 28 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Ruth Hill

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized junior school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British, with a minority from other minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.
- An average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils.
- There is no alternative provision for pupils.

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

- Improve achievement in reading by
  - ensuring all pupils have securely gained the skills they need to link sounds to letters
  - better developing pupils' understanding of what they read.
- Move teaching from good to outstanding by
  - making sure that work is sufficiently demanding for all pupils
  - making sure that pupils respond to teachers' comments in their books and act upon their advice.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment is rising over time at a much faster rate than nationally as the quality of teaching continues to improve. In 2012 pupils did particularly well in English, with more than half the pupils attaining the higher Level 5. This is because pupils have plenty of opportunities to write at length and in different subjects, and teachers have high expectations of what they can achieve.
- Attainment is above average across the school in reading, writing and mathematics, and pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Consistently good teaching over the past 18 months has closed gaps in attainment and overcome a legacy of underachievement from weak teaching in the past.
- Pupils' achievement in reading has not been quite as rapid as in writing and mathematics because some younger pupils struggle with the sounds that letters make and find it difficult to read new words. The school has identified that the extent to which pupils understand what they are reading varies. While older pupils can read text fairly fluently, they do not always understand the nuances of its meaning.
- The school uses information and communication technology well to develop pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy, using a wide range of computer software to engage pupils and motivate them to learn quickly.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because well-targeted support enables them to meet and exceed individual targets and make the same progress as their peers.
- Those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress because the school spends its additional funding wisely on extra teaching. As a result, their scores in national tests in English and mathematics are similar to those achieved by their classmates. Teachers involve pupils closely in setting their own targets and discussing individually with their teachers how they are getting on.
- All groups of pupils achieve well, including those who speak English as an additional language. Teachers are careful to adapt their planning to ensure that these pupils are fully included in lessons and are given the help they need to succeed.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Classrooms are set out in ways that make learning exciting for pupils, with attractive displays and helpful tips on the walls about how to improve their work. Pupils are given regular challenges to extend their thinking and encouraged to reflect upon their learning. They are given plenty of choices, so that they are in control of what they are learning, and have a good understanding of how they are getting on.
- Teachers always explain clearly to pupils what they are going to learn and how they can get the most out of their learning. They use questioning well, not only to help pupils to link their ideas together and to check their understanding, but also to probe their thinking and to deepen their understanding.
- Teachers make good use of 'visualisers', projectors that display pupils' work for the whole class to see, so that pupils can comment upon one another's work and share good examples. This helps to make learning meaningful for them and celebrates the high quality work that they produce.
- Year 5 pupils enjoyed exploring animal characters with human characteristics. The teacher amused them by describing the animal he thought his characteristics best represented (a bear) and inviting them to come up with an animal based around the headteacher. His use of a morphing application that digitally turned him into a speaking bear captivated pupils' attention, and motivated them to consider what animal they might represent.

- Much of the learning is active and based on real-life situations, which pupils find relevant and interesting. For example, pupils were absorbed in arguing for and against plastic bags from the point of view of a local councillor and a plastics manufacturer.
- The pace of learning occasionally slows when teachers do not plan tasks that are sufficiently demanding for all pupils in the class, resulting in some loss of concentration.
- Teachers follow the school's marking policy well and show pupils how to improve their work. In some cases, however, pupils are not given the time to respond to these comments or act upon them, so that they do not benefit as much from them.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well. Support staff make a valuable contribution to their learning, and the school's caring approach ensures that they grow in confidence and are not afraid to make mistakes.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium receive additional teaching support and have a good knowledge of their targets for improvement. They are able to describe how they will reach the next level of attainment and what they are focusing on. In this way they make good progress.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge means that mathematics is taught well. Enjoyable class competitions for learning times tables motivate pupils. They are encouraged to talk about how they solve problems and explain different methods of calculation.
- Improvements in the teaching of writing have led to rapid progress for most pupils, with attainment at well-above-average levels. While the school promotes reading well, and has an excellent library that is well stocked and attractive to pupils, there has not been sufficient focus on making sure all pupils consistently know the sounds that letters make. The school is remedying this. Similarly, older pupils have not always had opportunities to draw the full meaning from text and this is an area the school is developing.

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

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. They work well together with partners and as part of a group, and play an active role in lessons. They offer constructive criticism to their classmates about how they could improve their work. Just occasionally, if the work is too easy, pupils can become distracted.
- Pupils say that behaviour is typically good, and parents agree. They understand about different forms of bullying, such as name calling and cyber bullying, although they say bullying in school is extremely rare. They have every confidence in adults to sort out any problems they may have.
- The school is very good at sharing its values with pupils and making clear its expectations. It does this through displays in the public areas and assemblies. Over a period of time this has lifted pupils' aspirations and given them ambition to succeed. This means that pupils are very focused on improving their learning and want to know how best they can do this.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and they have a good understanding of managing risk and avoiding dangerous situations. They know how to stay safe on the internet. Good links with local police mean that pupils understand about road safety and protecting their houses from burglars.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility, such as selling fruit and newspapers at break times, or making known their views to the headteacher. They were pleased that their request for a cooking room was granted and feel that school leaders listen to them.
- Attendance is above average, with very little persistent absence. The school has effective measures to promote attendance, and pupils enjoy being there.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher's relentless focus on improving the rate of pupils' progress has borne fruit as inadequate teaching has been eliminated and the proportion of good or better teaching has increased. The school's refusal to accept anything less than consistently good teaching has set a

culture of expectation that has permeated through to pupils, who aspire to do as well as they can.

- The school's excellent arrangements for performance management set out extremely clearly exactly what is expected of teachers at any given stage in their career, so that they know precisely how well they are doing and where they need to improve. Demanding targets have set the bar high for teachers, but they also receive the training and support they need to be successful.
- Leaders and managers check the quality of teaching rigorously and regularly, giving helpful feedback to staff about how they can improve their work further. All subject leaders are involved in gathering evidence about how well their areas are performing, and are having a positive impact on driving forward improvement.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher make a strong leadership team and set a clear vision for the whole-school community, based on the pursuit of excellence and high expectations. No one is in any doubt about the school's priorities, because leaders have successfully shared their good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas to improve. Strategic plans effectively describe how the school is moving forward, and set clear steps that can be easily measured to check its progress along the way.
- The teaching of particular topics is planned to make learning enjoyable and stimulating for pupils, with plenty of memorable experiences and visits to places of interest, such as the Science Museum. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, especially in the way that it involves them in their learning and encourages them to support one another.
- The school ensures that all pupils are treated equally and that all make good progress, providing whatever support is necessary to include them fully in all activities. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The school fosters good relations with parents and other agencies, including the nearby infant school, as staff work together to smooth pupils' transition into the junior school, for example by using the same exercise books and schemes of work.
- The local authority has provided a good level of effective support to the school, but recognises that, as the capacity of the school to improve has increased, its involvement is reducing. It continues to provide high quality training to staff as requested by the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors know the strengths of the school well and understand how well it is improving and how the quality of teaching is growing ever stronger. Governors understand about the school's favourable performance compared with similar schools. They recognise the high quality of its appraisal arrangements and how good performance is recognised and rewarded. Governors take an active role in setting the school's priorities for improvement. The governing body ensures that finances are managed wisely, and understands how the pupil premium is spent, and its impact on closing the gap in attainment for eligible pupils. Governors ensure that they are professionally trained and developed to carry out their roles effectively. They make sure that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

## 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 pupils' 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 pupils' 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>	102284
<b>Local authority</b>	Havering
<b>Inspection number</b>	404816

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>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Keith Turner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christopher W Hobson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21–22 September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01708 552870
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