

Hertford Junior School

Lynchet Close, Brighton, BN1 7FP

Inspection dates 10–11 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching has improved and is often good but it is not consistent and does not always lead to good achievement.
- Teachers do not consistently provide activities at the right level of difficulty for the more able pupils because they do not always have high enough expectations.
- Teachers do not always use different levels of questioning that are matched to pupils' abilities.
- Teachers assess pupils' understanding during lessons but do not always use this to change activities or the pace of lessons in response. They do not consistently give pupils time to practise identified areas for improvement.
- Pupils' progress has historically been too low. They are not confident writers and consequently they make less progress than they should in English.
- Many pupils have weak vocabulary skills and this affects their ability to improve their writing.
- Teachers do not consistently give enough opportunities for pupils to practise writing at length.
- Teachers do not share good practice in the school well enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers, including governors, have made many improvements since the previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching is improving, especially in mathematics and reading.
- Pupils are now reaching expected levels of attainment.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They have good attitudes to learning and particularly enjoy topic work and practical activities.
- Pupils feel very safe and their attendance has improved.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, all of which were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team.
- In addition, the inspector heard pupils in Year 3 read, watched an assembly and observed playtimes.
- The inspection took account of the 44 online parent and carer questionnaire responses, two letters and spoke informally to parents and carers as they collected their children.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, leaders and managers, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, staff and pupils.
- The inspector looked at various aspects of the school's work, including documentation about safeguarding and pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. She also looked at pupils' books, planning and evaluation records, minutes of the meetings of the governing body and external reports.

Inspection team

Helen Howard, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized junior school.
- Nearly half the pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding, which gives additional funding to those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority. This is a much higher proportion than found nationally.
- The proportions of pupils who have special educational needs who are supported through school action and through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are much higher than nationally.
- Most pupils have a White British heritage.
- In 2012 the school met the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school was given a Notice to Improve in September 2011. Areas for improvement included improving attainment and progress, sharpening the skills of subject leaders, improving attendance and enhancing the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that more is good or better by making sure that teachers:
 - consistently plan activities that are at the right level of difficulty and challenge the most-able pupils
 - develop questioning that is targeted at different levels of ability
 - use the assessments they make during lessons to change activities or pace when necessary
 - give pupils more opportunities to practise areas for improvement that are identified in marking.
- Raise achievement in English by ensuring that pupils become more confident writers by:
 - consistently having high expectations of what pupils can do
 - giving more opportunities for pupils to write at length in all areas of the curriculum
 - using topic work to increase pupils' vocabulary
 - sharing good practice in school so that teachers can plan challenging activities together.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although attainment rose in 2012, pupils make weaker progress in English than in mathematics. This is because their skills in writing are not as consistently strong as in reading. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work show that progress is improving and that this is being sustained.
- Many pupils do not have a wide range of vocabulary and this limits their ability to improve their writing. They do not consistently write longer pieces of work in a range of subject areas.
- Not enough of the more-able pupils reach the higher levels. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can do. In lessons and in pupils' work, their progress remains variable because some work is too easy and does not stretch them enough.
- Senior leaders and managers now rigorously monitor every pupil and this is increasing the rate of progress especially in mathematics and reading.
- Pupils reach average attainment in reading by the time they leave school and school records show that this is rising. Most pupils make better progress when reading links well to topic work.
- Pupils who start school with below average reading skills make good progress because they have additional support from teaching assistants and because the new reading scheme helps them to practise the skills they are learning in matching letters and combinations of letters to the sounds they make (phonics).
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make expected progress. Some make good progress because the school carefully matches programmes of work to their needs and they are very well supported by teaching assistants.
- Pupils who are eligible to receive additional pupil premium funding attain average point scores that are similar to those of pupils who are not eligible. This shows that gaps in attainment are closing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Across the school, there is some good and occasionally outstanding teaching but there is still too little good teaching, especially in English. As a result, a minority of pupils underachieve.
- Teachers use assessment well during lessons to check pupils' understanding but they do not always change the activity or pace of the lesson in response, for example when more-able pupils demonstrate they already understand. Consequently, progress sometimes slows.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and most teachers give specific comments, called 'next steps', to help pupils improve their work. Not all teachers give pupils enough time to practise what they have been asked to improve.
- Teachers use questioning well in mathematics to encourage pupils to think for themselves. This is not as consistently used in English and pupils do not make the same accelerated progress as a result.
- Teachers provide lots of opportunities for pupils to use and develop their numeracy skills in different contexts and subjects.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and the vast majority of pupils say that learning is fun. In a Year 3 literacy lesson for example, pupils were part of a news team, writing about the group's response to discovering a robot. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed reading their work aloud. The level of writing was of a very high quality. One pupil wrote impressively, 'The Year 3 pupils crowded round the robot like a herd of buffalo.'
- Senior leaders and managers robustly monitor teaching and recent improvements are leading to better teaching and progress. The school has recently introduced 'The Big Picture', in which teachers outline what pupils will be learning over a period of time. Pupils say that this helps them 'a lot' to check how well they are doing.

- The headteacher and senior leaders have developed progress meetings, in which pupils' progress is carefully tracked. Teachers use the information well to plan activities that help pupils catch up if they are underachieving.
- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils. The vast majority of parents and carers think that teaching is good and pupils say that teachers are very friendly and help them if they are stuck.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently good. Pupils are polite, friendly and have good manners. The school provides information and advice to pupils on how to stay safe. Consequently, pupils say that they feel very safe in school and most parents and carers agree.
- Pupils are beginning to take more responsibility for their own behaviour. They especially appreciate the 'stop it' script that they have been taught to use if they do not like what someone is doing and say that it helps them to take control.
- Senior leaders and managers have raised expectations about pupils' attitudes to learning since the previous inspection. Teachers make these clear in lessons and as a result, pupils are proud of what they can achieve and most are actively involved in tasks.
- Some pupils, especially those who are more able, are not always given the opportunity to learn independently so that they are not as actively involved in their own learning as they could be.
- The school promotes equal opportunities well and takes firm action in tackling discrimination. Staff successfully place great emphasis on building positive relationships. Pupils quickly settle when they join the school. All pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are able to take part in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils are acutely aware of the different types of bullying, including homophobic and internet bullying, and they say that incidents are extremely rare. They are confident that the school deals well with any reported incidents.
- The school has introduced several strategies to improve attendance such as celebrations of high attendance and lack of tolerance for unauthorised absence. Working in partnership with parents and carers, the school has been successful in improving attendance since the previous inspection and it is now average and rising.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and who have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties make good progress over time because they receive good individual and small-group support from the school and from external partners.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's strong leadership has brought about many improvements since the previous inspection. She is supported well by the staff. Improvements include teaching, attainment, behaviour, attendance and the effectiveness of middle level leaders and managers. This demonstrates the school is well placed to make further improvements.
- Leaders and managers have improved their ability to robustly monitor the work of the school and their checks on how well it is doing are accurate. They know the school's strengths and areas for further improvement well and take effective actions to address them.
- The local authority has effectively supported the school in making improvements, including in developing the school's action plan and funding consultancy support to improve teaching. A strong partnership with a local headteacher of a school judged to be outstanding by Ofsted provides support for improving the effectiveness of leadership and management.
- Leaders and managers have developed a topic approach to learning in the curriculum. Each includes a 'fabulous finish' which celebrates with parents and carers what pupils have learned. One parent or carer described how her child had experienced a visit from a Roman soldier and an archaeologist, had made puppets and seen genuine Roman artefacts. She wrote, 'These

brought the topic alive for my son.'

- The broad curriculum, together with activities after school, develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Parents and carers who responded to Parent View are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They say that they receive good information about how well their child is doing. Increasing numbers of them attend school events such as workshops and assemblies.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have strengthened many aspects of their leadership because they have undertaken a wide range of training. They have a strong role in planning for improvements and are actively involved in monitoring how well the school is doing. They know that the quality of teaching is not consistently good. They are fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. Consequently, they hold senior leaders and managers to account effectively and set targets for improvement. Financial management is secure and governors know how additional pupil premium funding is spent, including one-to-one tuition for mathematics, additional staffing and a breakfast club. However, they have not yet fully evaluated the impact of these on pupils' achievement. Strong procedures for teachers' performance management, including the headteacher's, make sure that governors link appraisal to pupils' progress. They reward staff for meeting threshold standards or for good leadership. Governors meet their statutory duties and ensure that safeguarding requirements are met.

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

Unique reference number	114383
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	399674

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wenda Bradley
Headteacher	Joan Marshall
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 October 2011
Telephone number	01273 557341
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