

Horringer Court Middle School

Glastonbury Road, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 2EX

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Leaders have improved the school's results by taking effective action to improve teaching and achievement.
- Pupils' progress is improving in English, and has risen greatly in mathematics. It is now good, and sometimes outstanding, as they move through the school.
- Well-planned support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs enables them to make good progress.
- Teaching is typically good and occasionally outstanding.
- Pupils are well behaved. They value the rewards for good behaviour.
- Pupils feel safe. Good safeguarding and child protection arrangements ensure that they are well looked after.
- Good relationships between pupils and with adults lead to good learning.
- Subject leaders lead their areas well.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school, visit regularly and hold the school to account for pupils' progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. In a few lessons work is not matched closely enough to pupils' ability levels, and teachers do not yet get enough opportunities to observe each other's work to share the very best practice.
- Pupils do not always present their work neatly, or make the improvements teachers suggest in their marking.
- Leaders and managers, including subject leaders and governors, are still refining their analysis and use of data to make sure improvement continues.
- The school is looking at ways to improve communication with parents and carers so that they can further support their children's academic development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 22 lessons taught by 12 teachers.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, governors, staff, a partner headteacher from the academy trust and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 76 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and carrying out the inspection, and also spoke to parent governors.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at its development plan, data on pupils’ progress and attainment, monitoring and self-evaluation procedures, a range of policies and the arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils.
- Pupils’ books were examined in lessons and in a separate work sample with senior staff.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

Michael Sutherland-Harper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
St John Burkett	Additional Inspector
Brenda Watson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average middle deemed secondary school.
- The very large majority of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding to help particular groups, such as pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of an academy trust, together with another middle school and a neighbouring secondary school. Horringer Court Middle School converted to become an academy on 1 August 2011. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- A small number of pupils are educated part-time at other schools to help their particular learning difficulties.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the majority of teaching and learning to outstanding by:
 - always matching work closely to pupils' differing ability levels and thereby providing a consistently high level of challenge for all pupils
 - increasing opportunities for staff to see outstanding practice in this school and elsewhere
 - ensuring that pupils respond to marking promptly, and that their presentation consistently reflects the highest standards.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management at all levels, including subject leaders and governors, through:
 - more effective analysis and use of data to promote improvement
 - better communication with parents and carers about how they can support their children's academic development.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good. The school's own assessments show that attainment on entry to the school is usually below the standard expected nationally because not all pupils have developed secure basic skills in English and mathematics. Skills on entry have been weaker in mathematics than in English.
- Progress rates are rising in English and mathematics, and especially in mathematics. An increasing number of pupils reach the highest National Curriculum levels in both subjects. The present Year 6 pupils are on track to improve on previous performance in all areas, as judged by work seen during the inspection and school data.
- A number of strategies, including single-sex classes in Year 6 for English and mathematics, are successfully engaging boys with writing and girls with mathematics. In an all-boys Year 6 English lesson with speaking and listening activities, pupils made excellent progress because the teacher chose a topic based on a recent film (*The Hobbit*) many pupils had seen. In ability groups, pupils were challenged to create an advertisement for selling hobbit homes and then made confident presentations to the other pupils who assessed their work.
- Tracking systems have been refined to provide a wider range of information, so that any pupils falling behind in their work are quickly identified and supported. However, the school recognises that it is not yet making the most of this information to identify wider trends and aid improvement.
- The headteacher of the academy's partner secondary school confirms that pupils leaving this school at the end of Year 8 continue to make good progress in the upper school.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make good progress because their needs are carefully assessed and the help and guidance provided for them are regularly reviewed and modified if necessary. Pupils who are temporarily provided for in other schools make similar progress to others. The school maintains regular contact with these other providers, and it increases as pupils are about to be reintegrated.
- Pupil premium funding provides additional support staff, smaller group sessions and opportunities which some pupils might not otherwise be able to afford. Test results and assessments show that attainment gaps have closed with other pupils in both English and mathematics, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are currently making progress that is similar to, and sometimes better than, that of other pupils.
- Regular guided reading sessions take careful account of pupils' starting points and overall ability, and thereby ensure that reading skills rise as pupils progress through the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The large majority of lessons seen were good and some were outstanding. A very small number of lessons required improvement or were inadequate. Most parents and carers who replied to the online parent survey feel their children are taught well, as confirmed by the school's most recent parental questionnaire.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They ask probing questions in lessons to assess pupils' understanding. In a Year 6 French lesson, all pupils made excellent progress because the teacher drew out the vocabulary and grammar they had already learned and applied these skills to the writing of more complex sentences. Expectations that pupils will produce good independent work in class are growing.
- Good relationships between staff and pupils ensure that pupils' learning is good. In the few less effective lessons, work was not matched closely enough to pupils' ability to keep them all consistently challenged and motivated.
- Opportunities are growing, through joint training within the school and as part of the academy trust, for staff to share their classroom strengths to ensure that teaching is always good or better. This process is not yet fully developed.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs benefit fully from all activities because teaching assistants monitor their work carefully, including during one-to-one sessions. Support provided is closely linked to their individual education plans.
- Reading is taught well and is aided by the library's promotion of a range of interesting books. Learning through themes has increased pupils' fluency and desire to read more and to write about their interests.
- Books are regularly marked. Marking frequently shows pupils how to improve their work, especially in English and mathematics. However, pupils do not consistently make the amendments necessary to avoid repetition of errors and keep work at the highest levels. Pupils' presentation is generally good but shows some variation across the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave very well in lessons and as they move around the school. The school's behaviour code is clearly understood. The rewards for good behaviour and the red card system are valued by all pupils. Good relationships between pupils and with adults reinforce these systems.
- Pupils have opportunities to support each other's behaviour as Year 8 trained counsellors. In this role, they wear a clearly visible 'smiley face' badge so that other pupils may readily turn to them.
- The very large majority of the parents and carers who replied to the online survey feel that behaviour is good, and that their children are safe in school. These views are supported by the school's own recent questionnaire as part of an overall academy survey.
- Pupils feel safe. They say that there is very little bullying of any sort, and any bullying that does occur is mostly verbal. Any incidents are very quickly addressed because adults intervene quickly to sort out problems. Pupils understand that there are different forms of bullying, and are clear about aspects like cyber-bullying.
- Pupils enjoy school because the emphasis is on learning well. They know they will be working steadily in lessons because they do not have to be concerned about behaviour. They also welcome the increasing possibilities to take on responsibility beyond lessons, including at breaks and on the school council.

- Attendance figures are improving following concerted action by school leaders to ensure that the rates are at least in line with national averages. Persistent absence rates are dropping. Pupils arrive punctually at school and to lessons. Exclusions are rare because the school's strong pastoral systems aim successfully to sort out any problems in-house. Quickly addressing issues as they arise means that extremes of behaviour do not occur.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has broadened the senior leadership team to implement the school development plan effectively. Good self-evaluation accurately identified improving achievement and teaching and stronger links with the academy trust as key priorities. These areas have improved, although the school rightly feels that it could develop communication with parents and carers to help them more fully support their children's academic development.
- Subject leaders' roles have developed. Appointments focus on bringing in new staff who are able to manage and improve subjects. Subject leaders are expected to mentor each other. The school is introducing team teaching, where leaders help colleagues develop their skills. Subject leaders have identified the need to better evaluate the impact of their work and ensure further improvements through more effective analysis and use of data.
- Systems for assessing staff performance are rigorously applied by reference to national 'Teachers' Standards'. Promotion depends on results. Teachers' performance targets are linked appropriately to whole-school priorities. The impact of teachers who have positions of responsibility is evident from improving attainment in English and mathematics.
- Safeguarding and safer recruitment procedures meet current national requirements, and are reinforced by regular staff and governor training. Child protection is given a high priority.
- The school works effectively within its local academy trust. Regular meetings review any work jointly carried out and are supplemented by group sessions for subjects, including English and mathematics. Some staff support work across all schools in the group, ensuring consistent standards.
- The range of taught subjects is carefully thought out. It has been changed recently to give a high priority to English and mathematics and increased time for other subjects. The school plans to improve 'curriculum Fridays' which focus on a single topic, and to develop humanities and languages.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Visitors reinforce the school's regular links with local churches. Lessons on beliefs and values help pupils develop their sense of right and wrong. Charity weeks raise significant sums for local causes. Links are growing with schools in Rwanda and the Philippines.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have regular contact with the school. The Chair communicates with the headteacher several times a week. The governing body is full, with an increasing number of parent governors. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of teaching through visits to lessons and apply this knowledge to managing teachers' performance, with additional staff training where underachievement is observed. Governors challenge the school regularly about finance, results, the quality of teaching and staffing. They check that pupil premium funding is

used effectively through this regular challenge. Governors feel they would benefit from further training in the analysis of data on pupils' performance, and its use in ensuring continued 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 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	137179
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	406657

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	273
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Culpin
Headteacher	Tania Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01284 755626
Fax number	01284 704494
Email address	admin@horringercourtmiddle.co.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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email 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, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: 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.

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
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

