

# Linton Heights Junior School

Wheatsheaf Way, Linton, Cambridge, CB21 4XB

**Inspection dates** 26–27 June 2013

<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' achievement is good. By the end of Year 6, they are reaching standards which are above average. This represents good progress in relation to their average starting points.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good because of thoughtful teaching and well-planned support.
- An increasing amount of teaching is outstanding and pupils respond well to interesting, challenging lessons delivered by knowledgeable, caring teachers. English and mathematics are both taught well.
- The use of the pupil premium to support the achievement of eligible pupils has firmly narrowed the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils show consistently positive attitudes towards learning and each other because of the importance placed upon this by leaders and teachers. Pupils feel safe, attend well and work hard.
- Leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and remaining areas for development. Accurate self-evaluation of all areas, and especially teaching, has helped drive leaders' firm improvements in the quality of education.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few lessons, planning does not allow enough time for all pupils, particularly the most able, to learn as well as they are capable.
- Teachers' use of questioning does not always help pupils understand how to develop their understanding of work as well as it should.
- There are some inconsistencies in the use of homework so that some pupils miss the opportunity to extend their learning following successful achievement in school.
- While teachers and leaders take effective action following parental concerns, there are a few occasions when information is not reported back to parents as quickly as it could be.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by nine teachers. Eight of these observations were carried out with members of the school's senior leadership team.
- Inspectors carried out a number of shorter visits to study pupils' work and also visited an assembly.
- Meetings were held with a total of 60 pupils, senior leaders, subject leaders, members of the governing body and a local authority advisor. Informal meetings were held with a small number of parents
- Inspectors studied documents including the school's self-evaluation report, raising achievement plan, curriculum papers, policies and assessment information. They also scrutinised pupils' work during lesson observations.
- Inspectors considered 70 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Responses to questionnaires completed by 21 staff were studied. They also considered the school's staff and parent survey information. Inspectors also received and took account of parental correspondence during the inspection.

## Inspection team

David Turner, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Matthew Klimcke

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- Linton Heights Junior School is an average-sized junior school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receiving support through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average. This is additional funding allocated by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school offers a breakfast club which is the responsibility of the governing body.

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

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement further by ensuring that:
  - time is used well in all lessons so that all pupils have the opportunity to learn as well as possible and to the full extent of their abilities
  - all teachers develop effective questioning skills which help every pupil understand how to improve more quickly and precisely in all lessons
  - current improvements in the setting and use of homework to support learning are checked upon carefully and shared with parents.
- When any parent contacts the school because of a concern, ensure that information about the action taken to address the concern is shared quickly with the parent.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is much improved since the last inspection. This is because of a concerted effort from leaders and teachers to raise standards in English and mathematics. Pupils enter the school with standards which are broadly average and make good progress so that, by the end of Year 6, their attainment is above average. In 2012, there was a sharp improvement in pupils' performance, and current work shows they are on track to carry on achieving well.
- Teachers and senior leaders regularly check on the progress of pupils so that any who are at risk of falling behind are quickly identified and effective steps are taken to help them catch up.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. Younger pupils benefit from well-structured teaching that helps them understand and use the sounds that letters make (phonics). They also enjoy talking and writing about the books they read. Older pupils can quickly put their reading skills to good use by offering intelligent comments about the views authors put across in stories.
- Pupils' achieve well in writing. Good teaching helps them develop their writing skills in English and other subjects. Pupils are good writers because they are encouraged to be imaginative while also learning the importance of structure, language and a rich vocabulary. Accuracy in spelling and punctuation is also well maintained. As a result of their progress and knowledge about writing, pupils' performance is confident even when under pressure to work quickly.
- Pupils speak well and with confidence because teachers encourage and support their reasoning and thinking skills in full class discussions. As a result, pupils of all abilities frequently offer long and thoughtful answers which are well explained.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is good. Considerable effort has been spent on mental mathematics and calculation skills, and teaching is organised so pupils use their knowledge in real-life situations. This allows them to see how important numeracy is in their lives. One good example was in a lesson in Year 5 where pupils successfully used their knowledge of ratios and proportion to estimate the ingredients and costs for planning a meal.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is strong because teachers and leaders assess them well and teaching is well matched to their abilities. Lessons interest them, and teachers have high expectations for them. They receive strong help and support from well-qualified teaching assistants which allows them to learn with confidence with others or by themselves when it is suitable.
- Pupils in receipt of the pupil premium make good progress. The school has used this additional funding to enable them to be taught in smaller groups and enjoy a full range of activities with other pupils. In 2012, the gap between their attainment and that of their classmates narrowed to just over three terms in English and just under three terms in mathematics. Good teaching is continuing to quickly narrow this gap across the school.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Teaching is consistently good and an increasing amount is outstanding. This is a key reason why pupils' achievement has risen in English and mathematics. There are still a few examples of teaching which requires improvement, but no inadequate teaching was seen during the inspection.

- Teachers are well qualified and apply their strong subject knowledge in interesting ways to capture pupils' commitment to learning. In two English lessons in Year 6, pupils enthusiastically took on the role of different people, animals and even objects to develop their skills in writing from different perspectives about a crime scene
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are extremely positive. Teachers are strong role models and encourage pupils to work together, be patient and respect what others say. As a result, group work is very productive and has played an important part in the improvement of pupils' relationships across the school. An outstanding example was in a literacy lesson in Year 5 where pupils carefully discussed their views about successful film scripts as they designed their own animation films.
- Teachers make careful use of assessment information to organise pupils' learning. Lessons are well planned and demanding so that pupils receive work which is well matched to their abilities. The most successful teaching also ensures pupils have plenty of opportunities to learn actively at a pace which is suitable for their ability. However, in a small number of lessons, use of time is less effective. As a result, some pupils, particularly the most able, do not always get the chance to take their learning as far as they are capable.
- In the best teaching seen, questioning and discussion are strengths. Good use is made of open-ended questions and pupils are given time to think and discuss their ideas with each other before they are expected to answer. In these lessons, good probing questions are asked as pupils work alone or in groups, which help them deepen their understanding. In a few lessons, teachers' use of questioning does not push understanding further when they are checking on pupils' progress.
- Teaching assistants and other adults are deployed successfully. They are patient and encouraging. They actively support the pupils they are supposed to help and work closely with teachers to ensure they know what to do each lesson.
- The marking of pupils' work is good. Thoughtful comments from teachers help pupils understand what they have done well and what they need to do in order to improve. Work is marked regularly and pupils respond well to the comments from their teachers because they are expected to and given the time to do so.
- The use of homework is generally effective but there are some inconsistencies in the way it is set and used to support learning away from school. Inspectors saw clear evidence that the school is swiftly addressing this matter.

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

- Inspectors observed a peaceful school where pupils respect one another and adults. They personally spoke with 60 pupils across the two days they visited the school. Pupils report that relationships have firmly improved in the last few years because the school has invested considerable time and effort in working on this. Pupils speak positively about the behaviour strategy of the school and the good examples set by their teachers.
- Behaviour in and around school is good, both in lessons and at break and lunchtime. In some lessons, pupils' behaviour is exemplary because of excellent teaching which gives them plenty of opportunities to work independently of their teachers.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school and would know who to speak to if they were worried about

any issues. Older pupils told inspectors that bullying rarely happens now and they have seen a big improvement in behaviour. Parents agree their children are safe at this school and teachers also report that behaviour is good and is managed well.

- The school's records demonstrate a significant fall in the number of incidents of poor behaviour and the use of exclusion has been reduced to the point where it is now well below national figures.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils arrive on time and are ready to learn, which is a reflection of the better relationships and climate within the school. High levels of absence have fallen significantly because of the strong work of the school with families to reduce days missed.
- When talking about their school with inspectors, pupils expressed pride and were enthusiastic about the interesting clubs, visits, projects, musical opportunities and active sports including fencing. They speak highly of topics including practical sciences and animation skills.
- Pupils contribute well to the life of the school and enjoy taking on positions of responsibility; for example, as 'buddies' helping other pupils who may be experiencing a concern or problem, or as members of the library or school council.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because, in a very few lessons, pupils do not have the opportunity to take their learning on as far as they are capable for themselves. This is linked to the use of time by teachers and the school is addressing this issue.

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

- Thoughtful and determined leadership from the headteacher, supported by her able deputy, has secured firm improvement at this school. Leaders have built a strong team of effective teachers who are committed to raising the achievement of every pupil. Staff give their total support to the leaders of the school.
- Leaders know the school's strengths and remaining areas for improvement in considerable detail because of their accurate assessment of teaching, pupils' achievement and their own leadership. As a result, they set out thorough plans which contain the right priorities and targets for the school. Improvement work is well timed and leaders know what ought to be done and by when, so they can regularly check on progress.
- Better-quality teaching has driven the improvement of pupils' achievement. Leaders use their accurate view of teaching to support teachers and set clear targets for the improvement of their performance. Teachers receive good-quality training and also benefit from performance coaching which is well managed by the headteacher.
- Teachers' pay is closely linked to the quality of teaching and they are rewarded fairly for raising pupils' achievement.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics are knowledgeable and effective. They work closely with senior leaders to improve achievement. Their organisation of the teaching for English and mathematics has improved pupils' literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils enjoy their learning because the school offers them an imaginative range of interesting subjects and topics. They are able to take their studies to greater depth because they are encouraged to use their knowledge in real-life situations. A good example is their creation of

animated films, following successful script-writing and production work. Assemblies, after-school clubs and trips are carefully planned so that each activity supports the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are clearly aware of the way their country is changing, and the positions of leadership they take on at school are helping them prepare for citizenship.

- The leadership of teaching for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. Good assessment, advice on teaching and the training provided for teaching assistants are notable strengths.
- The improvement of behaviour and attendance has been a significant step in the school's improvement journey. All staff have devoted themselves to improvements in pupil relations; as a result, the school is a far more harmonious setting in which pupils can achieve.
- The school has good links with parents and carers. Both report their children feel safe and the school keeps them well informed about their learning. Teachers and leaders take effective action in response to parental concerns. However, inspectors found there are a very few occasions where parents and pupils have not always been informed quickly enough about the actions leaders have taken in response to concerns. However, these issues are being swiftly addressed and there were no complaints received by inspectors during this inspection.
- The local authority has worked effectively with the school. Advice and support have been particularly suited to the improvement of teaching, subject leadership and behaviour.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is a strength. Governors are highly committed and offer the school a useful variety of skills and experience. They receive good training. As a result, they understand the school very well and can identify the strengths of teaching as well as explaining the priorities of the school and how well leaders are addressing them. They are well informed because they visit regularly, know the school first-hand and receive thorough reports from senior leaders. They use this information to monitor the performance of the headteacher and the achievement of pupils. As a result, they are able to ask important, searching questions of leaders and teachers. Governors also have a clear understanding about the school's use of the pupil premium and the way in which teachers' pay is matched to their performance.

## 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>	110672
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405296

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>	231
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tanya Carter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jennifer Malone
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01223 892210
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