

Arnett Hills Junior Mixed and Infant School

Berry Lane, Rickmansworth, WD3 4BT

Inspection dates

8–9 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 has been too varied during the past two years and not enough pupils have made better than expected progress, particularly in writing.
- Whilst attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average in reading and mathematics, it is closer to average in writing.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to write extended pieces in English or to fully apply their writing skills in other subjects.
- Learning activities are not always pitched right for the differing abilities of pupils, particularly the most able. This hinders their progress.
- Pupils' learning can also be hindered listening to the teacher too long rather than being moved on to the main task.
- Leaders' analysis of pupils' progress has not been rigorous enough.
- Some leaders are new to post and are not yet fully developed in their role.

The school has the following strengths

- In Reception, children have a good start to school and make good progress.
- Good progress continues through Years 1 and 2 and attainment is usually above average by the end of Year 2.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are taking positive action to accelerate pupils' progress through Years 3 to 6.
- Good improvements have been made in mathematics in Year 3 to 6 and pupils are now making good progress.
- The school's atmosphere is positive and welcoming.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- In some lessons, behaviour is outstanding.
- Pupils feel very safe and very well cared for by adults.
- Attendance is above average.
- Strong partnerships have been established with parents who hold very positive views about the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons. Some of these were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, representatives from the local authority, governors and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 54 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and correspondence from parents.
- The inspectors examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' plans, pupils' work and the school's development planning.

Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most of the pupils are White British. Pupils are also from a range of other ethnic heritage including Indian, any other White background and Chinese.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well-below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is average.
- A below-average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is good or better in all classes by:
 - making sure that teachers always set tasks at the right level of difficulty for individual pupils, particularly for the most able
 - ensuring that the learning in the lesson moves on at a quick pace and that pupils are swiftly moved on to the main task.
- Accelerate progress in Years 3 to 6, particularly in writing so that more pupils make better than expected progress and reach the higher levels by ensuring that they have plenty of opportunities to write extended pieces in English and in other subjects.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that pupils' progress is carefully checked and analysed and that action is taken to accelerate pupils' progress where needed
 - making sure that all leaders are fully developed in their role so that they can make an effective contribution to checking performance and to improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress in Year 3 to 6 has varied too much over recent years and pupils have not reached the standards they are capable of, particularly the most able in writing.
- Pupils enter Year 3 with above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, but the school has not consistently built on these starting points. While the results in national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2012 were above average in English and mathematics, not enough pupils made better than expected progress.
- Leaders and staff are taking positive steps to raise pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6, but pupil progress is not yet consistently good in all classes.
- Information on pupils' achievement and unvalidated information indicate that Year 6 results in 2013 are above average in reading and mathematics but closer to average in writing. However, national comparative data are not yet available to ensure accurate evaluation.
- Whilst a high proportion of pupils in Year 6 in 2013 attained the higher than expected levels in reading and mathematics, this was not the case in writing. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write extended pieces in English. Furthermore, opportunities are being missed for pupils to apply and develop their writing skills in a range of subjects.
- Effective action has been taken to raise achievement in mathematics. Last year's Year 6 made good progress through Years 3 to 6. An above average proportion of pupils made better than expected progress. A high proportion of pupils attained Level 6.
- Children start in Reception with knowledge, understanding and skills above those expected for their age. They make good progress because of good teaching and the interesting range of indoor and outdoor learning activities provided.
- Good progress continues through Years 1 and 2 and, by the end of Year 2, attainment is usually above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Over the years, pupils' achievement has been more consistent in the lower part of the school.
- Children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress in reading. The results of the Year 1 reading check were above the national average in 2013.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to that of other pupils, including those from different ethnic backgrounds.
- In 2012 the few pupils supported by the pupil premium were 3 terms behind their classmates in English and four terms behind them in mathematics. Recent additional support means that these pupils are now making faster progress and, consequently, gaps in their achievement in mathematics and English when compared with other pupils are beginning to close.
- Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles and physical fitness through the school's physical education programme and the additional range of sporting activities on offer. For example, during the inspection, about 35 pupils, in an early morning session, were exercising vigorously as they were being coached karate. The additional government funding for sport is being used

well to provide additional activities.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Over time, the quality of teaching has not been consistent enough to ensure that most pupils make good progress in all classes, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Activities and tasks are not always at the right level of difficulty for pupils. In particular, tasks are not always demanding enough for the most able. For example, opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to learn independently using a range of learning resources. The work is not always closely matched to the abilities of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The pace of learning declines when pupils spend too long listening to the teacher or consolidating learning that is already secure. For example in writing lessons, pupils sometimes spend too long consolidating vocabulary or planning rather than moving on to the main writing task.
- Throughout the school, teachers and support staff have developed strong relationships with pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. They work independently, in pairs or in small groups very well.
- Examples of outstanding teaching were seen in Reception and in Year 2. In Reception the children were provided with a wide range of exciting indoor and outdoor activities. They received well-focused teaching from adults. There were good opportunities for children to explore, be creative and learn on their own. In the hospital and the fire and police service areas children were creative and imaginative. They applied their language and writing skills extremely well.
- In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher in the role of a shop keeper inspired the pupils with her enthusiasm and lively questioning. Pupils made rapid progress in their knowledge of different coins and addition. They applied this learning extremely well by adding different coins to buy items in a shop. Challenging and interesting tasks were well matched to pupils' needs. The teacher swiftly corrected any misunderstandings and provided pupils with good opportunities to review their learning.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good in Years 1 and 2.
- The marking of pupils' work is well developed. Pupils find teachers' marking and feedback helpful. Good work is praised and there is clear guidance to help them improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents and carers who responded to Parent View strongly agreed that their children are happy, feel safe and are well looked after at school. They were also pleased with the school's promotion of good behaviour. These very positive views on behaviour and safety reflect the findings of the inspection.
- Pupils show enthusiasm for learning and participate well in the activities provided. Some pupil comments to the inspectors included, 'It is fun learning new things' and 'We enjoy the clubs'. However, occasionally, pupils can be passive learners when introductions to lessons go on for

too long or they are not moved on to challenging tasks quickly enough.

- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. In a few lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour were exemplary. The school's records of incidents show that behaviour is typically good over time and that effective steps are taken to deal with any unacceptable behaviour. Pupils feel very safe at school because they are extremely well looked after by adults.
- Discussions with pupils reveal that they have a good understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take, including persistent name calling, physical bullying and cyber bullying. They are all confident that inappropriate behaviour including bullying would be swiftly dealt with by staff. One pupil remarked with admiration, 'The headteacher doesn't stand any nonsense'.
- Pupils take great pride in their school and are positive and responsible citizens. Those on the school council represent their fellow pupils well. Pupils show a good understanding of different cultures and faiths. They raise funds for a range of local and international charities.
- Parents are very supportive and the pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Attendance is above average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because pupils' progress and the quality of teaching have not been consistently good in Years 3 to 6.
- Leaders' analysis of pupil progress has not been robust enough. The school has focused on pupils' attainment but has given insufficient attention to the progress that pupils' make in Years 3 to 6. As a result, the leaders believe that the school's overall effectiveness is better than it is.
- Some subject leaders are new to their post. There are plans to ensure that their roles are developed so that they play a full part in monitoring performance and bringing about improvement.
- Positive action is being taken to accelerate progress in Years 3 to 6 and to strengthen the teaching. The quality of teaching is regularly checked and helpful feedback is given to staff. Teachers new to the profession are supported by an experienced senior member of staff.
- The headteacher and staff have created a positive and safe environment for pupils to learn. Leaders and managers have promoted good achievement and good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2.
- There are appropriate procedures for checking the performance of staff. Targets to improve teachers' practice and skills are linked well to the school's priorities for improvement. Staff promotion and salary increases are correctly based on responsibilities, staff performance and the progress that pupils make.
- The pupil premium funding has been properly used to provide eligible pupils with additional support and learning opportunities. The progress of pupils supported by the premium is improving.
- There is an appropriate range of subjects and topics to promote pupils' learning. The range of

additional clubs, visits and sporting opportunities are appreciated by the pupils. Action is being taken to strengthen learning opportunities in writing.

- Pupils learn and develop in a caring, safe and positive community. All have equal access to the full range of learning opportunities provided. There are no signs of discrimination in the school.
- Until very recently, the school has not taken advantage of the support available by the local authority. The school has therefore lacked an external review of its performance which could have alerted leaders and governors to the issues of pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6. The local authority's view of the school's overall effectiveness is better than the findings of the inspection.
- The school has established strong partnerships with its parents and carers. The results of the Parent View survey indicate that they hold extremely positive views about the school and that their concerns are very few.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body bring a range of useful expertise to the school. Some are new and are developing in their role. Governors are aware of the pressing need to raise achievement in writing in Years 3 to 6. However, they have not been informed of the impact of the lower performance in Years 3 to 6 on the school's overall effectiveness. Governors are kept informed about the quality of teaching and understand recent requirements relating to the management of staff performance and the importance of promotion and salary increases being linked to pupil progress. They ensure that pupil premium funding is properly spent and check the improvements being made in this area. The governors have ensured that all safeguarding procedures 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

Unique reference number	117289
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	425374

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ash Patil
Headteacher	Tracey Ali
Date of previous school inspection	November 2008
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