

Coates Way JMI and Nursery School

Coates Way, Garston, Watford, WD25 9NW

Inspection dates 22–23 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Changes in staffing beyond the school's control have meant that the progress made in improving teaching last year has not been sustained. Some staff are still settling into their new roles.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good. The work pupils are given is sometimes too easy for some and too hard for others.
- Progress slowed and attainment dipped in 2012, although both improved in 2013. Even so, not all groups of pupils make similarly good progress.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and lower-attaining pupils make less progress from their starting points than other pupils. The extra help that the school has put into place has not yet had time to bring about improvement in standards.
- Achievement and teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage were recognised by the school and local authority as causing concern. Steps have been taken that have improved this provision but there is still work to do.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, including governors, were quick to respond to the dip in results in 2012 and take action to improve achievement.
- The focus on writing has restored this subject as a strength of the school. In 2013 an above-average percentage of pupils achieved the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The new curriculum is already enthusing pupils and teachers. Laptops and tablet computers are used well to support learning.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. The school is a very harmonious community which embraces and includes everyone.
- The headteacher's very strong leadership has meant the school has been swift to deal with weak teaching. Good systems are in place to check teaching and hold staff accountable for pupils' learning and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 16 lessons, about half with a member of the senior leadership team. They watched all the school’s teachers teaching, as well as observing assemblies, behaviour at playtimes and parts of lessons taught by external providers, such as music and physical education.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils about their work, examined their books and listened to some read. They talked with parents as to their views of the school. They took into account 40 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to a questionnaire completed by 19 staff.
- They also held discussions with school leaders, members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at the school’s documentation including the school’s self-evaluation and its plans for its future development, the school’s arrangements for keeping pupils safe, the records it keeps about pupils’ progress and how the quality of teaching is checked on.

Inspection team

Susan Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Appleby

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the additional government funding known as the pupil premium is lower than the national average, but is rising. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is low. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also low.
- Pupils come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. About two thirds are of White British heritage. The proportion of those who speak English as an additional language has risen over the last few years and is now slightly above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Provision for children within the Early Years Foundation Stage consists of Nursery provision, which takes place in the mornings only, and the Reception class.
- Four out of the eight class teachers joined the school at the beginning of the term in which this inspection took place. At the time of the inspection a supply teacher was teaching one class, because of recent long-term sickness.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good and often outstanding by ensuring:
 - all teachers use questioning effectively to probe and check on pupils' understanding and adapt the pace and challenge of lessons to reflect this
 - information about pupils' current levels and needs is used effectively by all teachers to plan lessons and to identify resources to meet the needs of different groups, so that the learning is neither too easy nor too hard
 - the best practice in marking is built on, so that pupils are clear as to what is good about what they have done and what they need to do next to improve their work.
- Improve the provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - continuing to work with the local authority to strengthen teaching and the ways in which children's development is monitored, planned for, recorded and promoted so that progress improves to at least good in all areas of learning
 - ensuring more systematic opportunities are provided to lay the foundations for early literacy skills
 - securing further staff skills in supporting and extending children's thinking and language when they are engaged in activities they have chosen themselves.
- Improve the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and of lower-attaining pupils, so that they make consistently good progress by:
 - continuing to develop the range of interventions and resources, including visual resources, used to support their differing learning needs, monitoring carefully the impact of these on achievement
 - setting challenging targets based on pupils' starting points and national guidance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement is not yet good because it has varied over time and not all groups are currently learning equally well. Results improved significantly in 2013 and are strengthening throughout the school. Higher attaining pupils now make at least the expected progress in all subjects.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are typical for their age, although the range varies from year to year. Previous shortcomings in this Nursery and Reception classes meant that children's attainment and progress were not accurately recorded. Good working with the local authority has changed this and has ensured that children make the expected progress during in both the Nursery and Reception class and that progress is improving.
- There are particular strengths in children's personal, social and emotional development because staff have high expectations and carefully nurture each child's confidence and involvement. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is broadly in line with that found nationally, although it is lower for boys.
- Children's early literacy development is promoted in the Reception class, but there is too little systematic provision for this in Nursery. This influences pupils' performance in the Year 1 phonics check, where skills are below the national average.
- Good support for reading in Years 1 and 2 means that pupils make up this ground and generally reach expected levels in writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. In 2013, pupils' attainment was above average in reading.
- Pupils' results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012 showed a decline from 2011 in mathematics and reading because some higher- and lower-attaining pupils did not make the expected progress from their starting points.
- The results in 2013 show an improvement, particularly for higher-attaining pupils. The progress of a small number of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and lower-attaining pupils still varies too much. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve at least as well as, and sometimes better than, their classmates.
- Pupils' progress throughout the school has accelerated, particularly in writing, because of the focused work the school has done to bring about improvement. Progress is not yet good overall because some of the interventions put into place are too recent.
- Pupils have very good skills in the use of computer technology. They use it well for research and pupils in Year 2, for example, take great pride and care in animating cartoons. The new creative curriculum enthuses and engages them so that they are keen to share their learning about the Stone Age, for example, or about other topics and themes.
- The small number of pupils supported through the pupil premium make similar and occasionally better progress compared with that of their classmates. The school has used this funding wisely to provide interventions and extra-curricular activities that nurture these pupils' confidence and talents and help secure their progress in key skills.
- Pupils' physical education and sports skills are good because the school provides many

opportunities for these skills to be practised. It works in conjunction with a specialist external provider and has extended the range of activities through the use of the additional sports funding.

- Pupils read widely and say that they enjoy reading very much. Their work is almost always well presented because teachers have high expectations of them. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about their children's achievements and progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies too much throughout the school. This is partly because so many staff are new, but also because staff sometimes do not always use information well to plan tasks and activities for all groups of pupils. As a result the learning of more-able pupils is not extended and lower-attaining pupils are not always fully engaged.
- No inadequate teaching was observed during the inspection. However, teachers do not always check pupils' understanding so that they can build on what they have already learnt. For example, in a mathematics lesson some pupils could already do money calculations up to 10p, but they still sat through the whole lesson on this topic and had to finish the work before moving onto extension tasks, rather than starting from a different point.
- Teaching is improving in the Early Years Foundation Stage because staff are being well supported by the new coordinator and the local authority. New systems of observation and recording ensure staff are clear about children's targets, achievements and needs. Children's learning is not always extended in activities they have chosen for themselves because staff do not always join in these activities sufficiently. Children sometimes lose focus as a result and do not get as much out of these activities as they could.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and manage their behaviour very well. They have excellent relationships with pupils, who know their teachers are ambitious for them, and so they try their best.
- Teaching assistants generally make a good contribution to pupils' learning and particularly where they have a clearly defined role in lessons. For example, the teaching assistant supported pupils in Year 1 very well when they worked with their talk partners, helping pupils to extend their answers further.
- The best teaching, seen at the upper end of the school, occurs when teachers use questioning very well to check on and extend pupils' understanding. In these lessons, teaching has good pace, sets challenges for different groups matched to their needs and abilities, and makes additional resources available for pupils with specific needs. Pupils are given opportunities to share their ideas and share and evaluate each other's work. Marking gives very clear indications to pupils as to how they can improve their work even more.
- Parents and carers consider their children to be well taught and pupils, too, are full of praise for their teachers, who they like very much. They say they learn well because their teachers make the work so interesting.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Their behaviour is not outstanding because in lessons where the teaching is not as strong, pupils' attention sometimes drifts and they

become restless as lessons lose pace. However in other lessons they enjoy their learning hugely and they engage quickly and with enthusiasm in all tasks, taking great pride for example in their presentation and handwriting, and reading their teacher's comments carefully.

- Pupils' relationships with each other and their teachers are excellent. Support for pupils' personal, social and emotional development is a particular strength of the school. Parents and carers say that the school nurtures the 'whole child' and undoubtedly it does. Pupils' views are sought and encouraged, and they listen carefully to what each other has to say.
- Good assemblies and excellent staff role models ensure that pupils develop a very strong sense of right and wrong, and of fairness and empathy for others. Inspectors saw many examples of pupils helping each other, whether showing other pupils how to work out a problem or bouncing a ball very gently so that a friend with weaker skills could catch it.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. They understand about different forms of bullying but say that it rarely happens at school and are confident that, if it did, teachers would 'sort it out' and deal with it fairly. They are pleased with the different things that they have to do at playtime and feel the new playtime arrangements are better and help them to play together safely.
- Attendance is high. Pupils say that they love school and don't want to miss any of it. Parents and carers agree that pupils are happy at school and their behaviour is well managed.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and governors were quick to act as progress slowed and standards fell in 2012. They have rigorously analysed data and progress to ensure the actions taken are paying off. They have recruited strong senior leaders to support the headteacher who have high expectations and have had a good impact on their departments in a relatively short time. Senior leaders have done well to settle new staff quickly so that learning continues smoothly. Good deployment of teaching assistants to support less experienced staff has supported this well.
- The leadership team has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and is in a good position to improve it further. Senior leaders collect and analyse assessment data rigorously and are swift to act if any pupil or group appears to make too little progress.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has been strengthened through new staff appointments and by identifying concerns early. Good examples of tailoring of work for individual pupils were seen during the inspection and of well targeted support for reading and writing that has yet to impact fully on these pupils' progress. Individual pupils are already making accelerated progress to the delight of their parents.
- Initiatives taken after the 2012 results are beginning to pay off. For example, better teaching has helped to raise standards and improve progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of higher-attaining pupils has now improved considerably and leaders are tenacious about analysing the progress of different groups such as those supported through the pupil premium. The pupils in the current Years 5 and 6 are well on course for replicating at least the standards reached in those year groups in 2013.
- The quality of teaching is monitored systematically through the performance management of staff. The school uses professional development well to help equip staff with the skills they need

to improve teaching further. Last year teaching improved quickly and considerably over the year as individual teachers strengthened their planning and classroom practice. Although some of these staff have left, leaders have a very clear plan to repeat the programme this year and have recruited a strong mixture of experienced and new teachers to deliver this improvement.

The school is in the process of revising its curriculum into a more 'creative', themed approach. This provides good opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils value the wide range of clubs available and the visits, including residential visits to France. These and strong partnerships with parents and the community contribute very effectively to their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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- The school ensures pupils are kept safe and works extremely well with others to over the safety of those pupils whose circumstances make them the most vulnerable. It is meticulous in keeping records and works very well with partner agencies, fulfilling all safeguarding requirements.
- The pupil premium is used well to ensure that gaps in attainment between the pupils who receive support and others are very small indeed. The school is using the sports premium funding for additional physical education training.
- The local authority has supported the school well during its staffing challenges. It has been particularly helpful in relation to the improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in training of governors.
- The leadership team has the full confidence of the local authority, parents and carers, staff and pupils who know that they are working hard to make the school even better. However leadership and management are not yet outstanding because leaders have not yet secured consistently good teaching and achievement throughout the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good understanding of its responsibilities and fulfils these well. Governors provide a good level of challenge to the leadership team and are highly visible in the school. They monitor standards and pupils' progress well and are determined that a dip in performance like that in 2012 should not happen again. They check on how the pupil premium makes a difference and are clear about the school's plans for using the sports funding. They ensure that decisions about pay increases are linked to targets based on pupils' progress and teachers' performance. The governing body meet its statutory duties well and makes effective use of the local authority's help. Governors challenge the headteacher systematically about how interventions are working. They ensure that the school is financially secure, checking the impact of financial decisions.

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	117340
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	413104

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Ellis
Headteacher	Steven Wells
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2009
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