

# Higham Ferrers Junior School

Saffron Road, Higham Ferrers, Rushden, NN10 8ED

**Inspection dates** 20–21 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Achievement in Higham Ferrers Junior School is good. Following a period of poor teaching in the past, progress rates have accelerated, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- By the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics are above average. Although attainment in English is not as strong, it is improving rapidly.
- Achievement for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is in line with that of their peers in school.
- Teaching has steadily improved and is consistently good. Work presented is fun, challenging and matches the ability levels of all groups of pupils.
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers constantly adapt and change their approach in response to the pupils' progress.
- Governors have improved considerably from the last inspection, providing good challenge and support.
- The headteacher has strengthened the leadership team and, with their support, has continued to improve the school.
- Leaders at all levels, including governors have made sure that teaching is of a good quality, leading to rising achievement.
- Pupils are happy in the school and feel safe. Behaviour is good and pupils know how to stay safe and healthy.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in writing is not yet consistently at or above national expectations.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils fully understand the work set or give them time to practise the skills taught.
- In a small number of lessons, the pace of learning is not always consistent, leading to inconsistent progress.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 23 lessons, and inspectors were joined by the headteacher and deputy headteacher in five of these observations.
- A number of pupils were heard reading and inspectors observed some pupils during the teaching of reading and letters and the sounds they make (phonics).
- Discussions were held with school leaders, three members of the governing body and a group of pupils. The lead inspector also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation covering safeguarding, the management of staff performance, records of behaviour and safety, attendance, checks on pupils' attainment and progress, and school improvement planning.
- The inspectors took account of the 18 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 220 responses to a recent school survey and the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elaine Williams

Additional Inspector

Margaret Jones

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Higham Ferrers Junior school is a larger than average-sized school.
- Pupils are taught in three classes per year group.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average but the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to support from the pupil premium (which provides extra funding to the school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from other groups such as children in the care of the local authority) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Raise achievement further by improving pupils' progress and attainment in writing through providing greater opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces of work.
- Raise the percentage of outstanding teaching by making sure that:
  - all teachers maintain the pace of learning and so maintain consistent rates of progress
  - teachers provide opportunities for pupils to both reflect on and practise the skills taught in lessons.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Following a period of historic underachievement resulting in pupils in several year groups having to catch up with their attainment and progress, achievement in the school is now good. School information, validated by external checks, shows that progress rates across the school are now higher than average. This accelerates even further in Years 5 and 6, resulting in the current Year 6 pupils being on track to reach levels in both English and mathematics that are above national expectations.
- Attainment in mathematics is above national expectations. In English it is lower, although attainment in this subject is improving rapidly. Current school information shows that progress across the school is good in both mathematics and English and increasing rapidly, especially in reading and writing.
- School information shows that the percentage of pupils making and exceeding expected progress in English is close to national expectations and above these in mathematics. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that progress over time, across all subjects taught, is good and for more-able pupils even better.
- The lower results in English in 2013 were due to these pupils not having caught up enough from an historic period of poor teaching, which has been overcome. However, the percentage of Year 6 pupils who left with the highest possible level (Level 6) in mathematics increased to above the national average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress in line with that of their peers in both English and mathematics. However, due to their low starting points they reach the end of Year 6 with attainment approximately a term behind their peers in school. These pupils' good progress is due to the good support provided by both teachers and the other adults who support learning during every lesson.
- Those pupils supported through the pupil premium funding make good and often better progress in English and mathematics, and their progress rates are higher than their peers in school. This results in their achievement being higher than their peers nationally but, due to the accelerated rates of progress now being made by their peers in schools, they are approximately a term behind them. In mathematics, this gap is slightly wider but the gap is closing rapidly.
- School information shows that all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds, make similar progress to each other and there are no significant differences between them.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and has improved steadily over several years. Teachers' planning is detailed and takes account of all groups of pupils within the class. Teachers' standards are being met.
- Teachers make learning fun and lessons interesting, as shown in a physical education lesson where pupils were learning the New Zealand 'Haka'. Pupils not only learnt how to carry out this dance but also the history and culture contained within it. The enjoyment the pupils expressed in this lesson was clear.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved considerably since the last inspection and this has

resulted in the rapid improvements in this subject. New resources, such as various counting, measuring and comparison apparatus, as well as mathematical books, are used effectively by all staff to make sure that pupils at all levels of ability make good progress. This was clearly shown during an excellent Year 6 lesson on ratios. Both adults in the room used excellent subject knowledge and language, and the assistant used a range of resources with the less-able pupils, to give a practical representation of the tasks.

- All pupils, and especially the more-able, are encouraged to work independently and to use their skills across all the subjects they are taught.
- Teachers have high expectations and the pupils rise to this challenge. As one pupil stated, 'The work is challenging but we enjoy it and we know we have to do our very best.'
- Work is marked regularly and comments given help to support learning and allow pupils to know how to improve their work further.
- All staff have a clear understanding of the needs of all their pupils due to good, ongoing assessment which they use to plan their next lessons.
- Where teaching is at its best, teachers have a good balance of providing time for pupils to practise the skills taught as well as making sure they fully understand what they are learning. However, in a small number of lessons, this is not always the case and this leaves pupils either not understanding their work or not having enough time to practise their skills.
- In English, teachers do not always give pupils enough time to write longer pieces of work and so put the skills they have been taught into practice. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to write longer pieces of work, and this holds back their achievement in writing.
- Most teachers make sure that the pace of lessons is suitable for the work set. However, in a small number of lessons, learning slows and pupils are not fully challenged. They lose concentration with minor distractions and so do not progress as quickly as they should.

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

- Pupils have a positive attitude to learning and enjoy attending school, which is shown by their above-average attendance.
- Pupils work and play together well. In lessons, they share resources, support each other in their learning and clearly enjoy the activities they are given.
- Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and feel that, although very occasionally there was some minor bullying, behaviour was good across the school. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the various types of bullying and how to stay safe when using the internet.
- The positive attitudes of the pupils are due to the positive role models presented by all staff at the school, which produces polite, courteous and well-behaved pupils. Parents and staff agree that behaviour in school is good.

- Pupils act as playground mentors and older pupils help and support pupils during break times and lunch breaks.
- Pupils know right from wrong and their personal social and moral skills are excellent, with pupils being highly courteous and polite both to each other and all adults. They have a very strong sense of right and wrong.
- Where teaching is not at its best some pupils lose concentration and minor distractions occur.

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

- The headteacher has reorganised the leadership team and this has led to sustained improvements across the school. The historic poor teaching has been removed and, through rigorous monitoring, has improved to be consistently good.
- The systems to monitor the quality of teachers' performance are linked closely to the professional development of staff, as well as their progression up the pay scales. Poor teaching is not tolerated and any drop in performance is tackled quickly by both senior leaders and governors.
- Systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress provide the senior leadership team with accurate information on which to plan future improvements to the school. This information is also used effectively by the teachers to make sure that they plan lessons which are matched to their pupils' abilities.
- The senior leadership team has forged strong links with other local schools and groups, and uses these to check the work of the school as well as providing opportunities to make sure that all staff have the skills and knowledge to carry out their roles effectively.
- Subject and other leaders monitor their areas of responsibility effectively as well as the quality of teaching in their subject areas. They mentor staff, and provide advice and support which helps staff to improve.
- A wide range of religions and cultures are studied throughout the school. This learning is supported through a number of visits and visitors to the school to further develop pupils' understanding.
- The government's extra funding for sports is used to provide external specialist sports coaching, both for the pupils and the teaching staff, in order to raise the quality of physical education across the school.
- Safeguarding aspects are managed well and all systems and procedures are carried out consistently by all staff. As a result, safeguarding arrangements meet all current requirements.
- The senior leadership team makes sure that all pupils are treated equally and make progress at least in line with expectations. This shows that the school promotes equal opportunities well and tackles any form of discrimination effectively.
- The local authority has supported the school for several years and has monitored both the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by the pupils. This has informed its view that the school has improved over time. As a result, the local authority has reduced its level of support.

**■ The governance of the school:**

Although the governing body has reduced in size, it is now more effective than at the time of the last inspection. It challenges and supports the school well by using a wide range of information to make sure that it has a clear and accurate view of the school. Governors use the national Data Dashboard to help them understand the school's data and pupils' achievement, and used this when challenging the school's information. They support the senior leadership team in making sure that all pupils are given an equal opportunity to take part in all aspects of school life. Finances are well managed and governors are well aware of how the pupil premium funding is used and the effect it has on the lives of the pupils for whom the school receives this extra funding. Governors carefully monitor the quality of teachers' performance and link this well to teachers' pay increases and school 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121828
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	424920

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>	342
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sean Reedman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Brown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 November 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01933 312748
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