

Hamstel Junior School

Hamstel Road, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 4PQ

Inspection dates

6–7 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Standards by the time pupils leave the school are improving, particularly in writing where teaching is very effective, and in mathematics.
- More able pupils make good progress in mathematics and achieve high standards.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good. They listen very carefully in lessons to their teachers and to each other. They talk about their ideas with confidence and readily offer answers in discussion work.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and throughout the school. Pupils, parents and staff all report that the school looks after pupils' safety and welfare very well.
- Teachers plan tasks well that interest and challenge pupils, setting high expectations for behaviour and for pupils' progress.
- The headteacher and senior leaders in the school have a very good understanding of what the school needs to do to continue improving and regularly check progress towards school development targets.
- Information about pupils' progress is used very well by managers at all levels to identify where pupils need extra support and where staff need further training opportunities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In mathematics, middle and lower attaining pupils are not progressing as well as the higher attainers, and the marking of written work does not show pupils what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers do not always identify pupils experiencing difficulties quickly enough.
- Until recently the governors have not checked often enough on the progress the school is making towards its development priorities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, including 4 joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors made short visits to other lessons, tutor periods and an assembly. They looked at samples of pupils' work and interviewed groups of pupils across the age range.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, subject coordinators, teachers, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of school documents, including: the school's self-evaluation, school-development plans, behaviour records, safeguarding records, governing-body documents, and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors also considered the views expressed in 64 questionnaires returned by school staff, together with the 29 responses submitted by parents to the on-line, Parent View, survey.

Inspection team

Roger Waddingham, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Evelyn Riley	Additional Inspector
Rachel Welch	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hamstel is a larger than average sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is well above average. This is additional funding allocated by the government for specific groups of pupils, including those looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Most pupils come from a White British background. The number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than in most schools of this size and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receiving extra support through school action is average; the proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by making sure:
 - teachers check that pupils understand what they are learning and identify more quickly any who are having difficulty.
- Improve achievement in mathematics, especially for the middle and lower attainers, by:
 - consistently setting work that reflects what teachers know pupils can already do and prompts them to move on to more difficult work
 - ensuring teachers' written feedback on classwork makes clear to pupils what they need to do to improve.
- Increase the frequency with which governors:
 - check on the progress the school is making with its development priorities.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards have risen well over the past three years. They were in line with the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics in 2013, which represents good progress from pupils' different starting points. The school has well-founded evidence to show that this good achievement will be maintained for pupils currently in Y6.
- Achievement in reading is good. The proportion of pupils making or exceeding expected progress is in line with national figures. Pupils use their reading skills well in lessons, showing confidence in obtaining information from texts they have read, and explaining clearly what makes a good quality answer in their work on comprehension. Year 6 pupils say they feel well prepared for secondary school because they have good opportunities to read a wide range of books that interest them.
- Standards in writing have improved rapidly because of the school's careful approach to developing pupils' skills. Regular practice with handwriting has led to good standards in the presentation of written work in a range of subjects. Imaginative writing is now a strength and pupils enjoy the challenge of re-working familiar stories. Pupils show a good awareness of basic grammar.
- Pupils are now making good progress overall in mathematics. Higher attaining pupils make very good progress and many attain the highest levels by the end of Year 6. Middle and lower attaining pupils have made slower progress in the past. This has now improved and progress seen in lessons is secure, although work does not always build on what pupils can already do or make sure that they are challenged to make rapid progress. School monitoring shows that all attainment groups are making at least expected progress in Y6.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium have narrowed the gap in their attainment compared to their peers. The school has used this funding effectively to provide additional one-to-one support and to extend its range of resources and learning materials. In mathematics and writing, the gap is now less than half a level, while in reading it is just above this. The progress of students who speak English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, and they achieve well.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress through the well-managed support now provided for them in classes. They receive a good range of carefully evaluated individual support sessions and well-directed help from teaching assistants in lessons.
- Pupils develop their learning skills well across a range of subjects. They write neatly and speak with confidence. They have appropriate opportunities to develop their numeracy and communication skills. Pupils show good interest in physical education and sport, and participation rates in after school activities are high. They are enthusiastic about swimming and perform well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and improving strongly. Most teachers plan tasks well that interest and challenge pupils, setting high expectations for their progress.
- In the great majority of lessons teachers explain carefully what pupils need to do, and use their

subject knowledge well to explain the main ideas being covered, illustrating them with real-life examples. They also use specialist vocabulary consistently to ensure pupils use key words with confidence in their answers.

- Teachers set challenging learning targets for pupils, who know what levels they are expected to achieve. Classroom displays in literacy and mathematics are used well to show individual targets for learning times tables and for improving pupils' writing, for example.
- The most effective teachers check pupils' progress systematically and identify quickly which pupils are having difficulty, supporting them well so that they make progress with their tasks. However, not all teachers do this consistently or check whether all pupils have understood their learning and are ready to move on to more demanding work, and this slows the progress some pupils make.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to support the progress of lower attaining pupils well. They show good skill in explaining tasks to pupils, highlighting key words, and giving guidance on their spelling and their meanings.
- Many examples were seen of the detailed marking of pupils' literacy work, so that pupils knew clearly what they needed to do to improve their writing. However, the marking of pupils' work in mathematics rarely contained such detail.
- Homework is used appropriately in different year groups to give pupils opportunities to develop their interest in reading and to strengthen their mathematics skills. The school is developing its use of on-line resources to support homework well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and this view is supported by the great majority of parents and staff. Behaviour between lessons in and around the school is good. Pupils play well together at break times and wait patiently in lunch queues.
- Behaviour in lessons is good overall and outstanding in some instances. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They are punctual to lessons and settle well to their tasks. They listen very carefully to their teachers and to each other. They talk about their ideas with confidence and readily offer answers in discussion work. They organise themselves well when working in groups and show good independence when accessing resources.
- Pupils say that bullying incidents are very rare, and they have great confidence in the school's procedures to deal with any that do occur. Pupils from all backgrounds feel well supported and the school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- Attendance is improving and has been above the national averages for the past three years. The level of persistent absence is below average. The school has effective systems to follow up any causes of concern and has improved its support for any individual pupils and their families who might need it.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders in the school have a very good understanding of what the school needs to do to continue improving and show a good capacity to carry out the actions needed. They regularly check how well pupils are doing, the quality of teaching and the school's

progress towards its development targets.

- The school's arrangements for self-evaluation and development planning are well managed, with clear and appropriately challenging targets set for pupils' achievement. The school uses a good range of information to evaluate teachers' performance and staff feel that their professional development needs are met well. Subject leaders are well trained and effective in monitoring standards in their subjects.
- Information about pupils' progress is used very well by managers at all levels to identify possible improvements. Teachers' assessments are checked very carefully and the very flexible way they are analysed is a strength of the school. For example, year team leaders use information about how well pupils are meeting their targets as the basis for regular discussions with teaching staff about which pupils need extra support and where staff need further training opportunities.
- The school offers a good range of subjects and pupils say they enjoy the opportunities for practical and creative development as well as the more academic subjects. They speak highly of the very extensive out-of-school provision for clubs, games and competitive sport. The school has used its government sport funding very well to provide coaching for pupils in a wide range of team and individual games including rugby, basketball, netball, gymnastics and swimming. The good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development results in very positive outcomes for their safety and well-being.
- The appointment of a member of staff with specific responsibility for inclusion has improved the support for disabled students, those who have special educational needs and those in receipt of the pupil premium, and their progress is now good. There is a well-managed combination of individual and group support from specialist staff together with support in class. The school's analysis of the impact of the different programmes of support on pupils' development is very accurate.
- The local authority brokered effective leadership and management support to the school at the time of the last inspection. Systems to manage pupil progress information were developed well through this support, for example.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all national requirements and are highly effective. Staff are kept up-to-date on safeguarding practices, record keeping is detailed, and support for vulnerable pupils and their families is well provided through learning mentors and a family support worker.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is appropriately trained and experienced. Governors manage their business effectively, recording discussions and decisions in committee meetings in clear detail. They are aware of the key areas for school improvement and understand what the school's pupil attainment information is saying about its performance.
 - Governors have not, in the past, checked the effectiveness of the school's work with sufficient frequency. They are beginning to take a more active part in monitoring developments in the school through a new system of visits to review progress with school development priorities.
 - Governors have a broad picture of teachers' performance and know what is being done to improve it, including the support given to weaker teachers.
 - Governors have access to detailed information on the provision for pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding and its impact, and are increasingly involved in strategic decisions in this area.

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	114770
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	430795

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	468
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ron Wright
Headteacher	Rupert Snow
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2012
Telephone number	01702 468048
Fax number	01702 602466
Email address	office@hamstel-jun.southend.sch.uk

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