

Gaddesden Row JMI School

Gaddesden Row, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 6HG

Inspection dates

18–19 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Children in Reception get off to a good start to their school life and make good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 6, particularly in reading and writing.
- In the current Year 6, attainment is above average in reading and writing.
- Pupils receive good teaching. Teachers' explanations and questioning promote learning well.
- The school has a caring and positive atmosphere where pupils learn and develop well.
- Pupils show a keen interest in their learning. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- There are good safeguarding procedures. Pupils feel safe and well cared for by staff.
- The headteacher provides good leadership which is raising achievement for pupils and developing teaching. She is well supported by the team of staff and the governors.
- There are positive partnerships with parents. Parents are pleased with the care and education provided.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics are not as good as in reading and writing.
- Teachers have not provided enough opportunities in the past for pupils to carry out investigations in mathematics or to apply numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Occasionally, tasks are not demanding enough to extend the most able.
- Guidance and targets to help pupils improve their learning are not used consistently well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons. Most of these were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, representatives from the local authority, governors and pupils.
- The inspector took account of the 20 responses to Ofsted's online survey of parents' views (Parent View).
- Questionnaires from five members of staff were analysed.
- The inspector examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' plans, pupils' work, safeguarding procedures, the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- About half of the pupils travel to the school from the nearby town of Hemel Hempstead.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- An above-average proportion of 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.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school partway through the year is higher than average.
- The school is organised into three classes. One class has Reception children and pupils from Years 1 and 2. The other two classes consist of pupils from Years 3 and 4 and pupils from Years 5 and 6.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are always fully extended
 - strengthening the guidance and the use of targets for pupils so that they know how to improve their learning, particularly in mathematics.
- Ensure that pupils make at least good progress in mathematics, and reach the standards of which they are capable, by:
 - extending opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems in mathematics
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in different subject areas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's attainment on entry to Reception varies from year to year because of the small numbers in the year groups. Some year groups enter with the knowledge, understanding and skills that are expected for their age, while for others they are below expectations.
- Children make good progress in all the areas of learning because of good teaching and the interesting range of activities provided. In one session, for example, children made good progress in learning about minibeasts because of clear guidance and instruction from adults. They observed the features of the creatures carefully.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 fluctuates because of the small numbers in the year group and because of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at expected times. Attainment was above average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2012 but was below average in 2013.
- Throughout the school, pupils are making good progress in reading and writing. Pupils' progress in mathematics is less consistent but improving. In the current Year 6, attainment is above average in reading and writing but broadly average in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of good teaching and the well-planned individual and small-group support they receive.
- There were no pupils in last year's Year 6 supported by the pupil premium. The school's assessments show that those supported by the pupil premium in other year groups are achieving at least as well as the others. Good support, including one-to-one tuition, helps ensure that pupils eligible for the funding make good progress.
- The most able pupils are making good progress. Just occasionally in lessons, the work set is not fully effective in extending their learning.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to reading. Children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2 do well in phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Texts and reading materials are linked well to the topics being studied. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 made good progress in finding useful information about different minibeasts.
- Pupils write for different purposes and apply their writing skills well to different subjects and topic work. Pupils in Year 6 wrote interesting and detailed accounts of their Victorian Day at Holdenby House. Their writing was well structured into paragraphs. In the role of a parlour maid, a pupil described her feelings and experience in this strict household. Pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling are developing well.
- The school's assessments show that pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics often trail behind those of reading and writing. Decisive action is being taken to raise achievement in mathematics. During the inspection, for example, pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 made good progress in finding the fractions of shapes. The more able found equivalent fractions.
- The school ensures that pupils develop healthy lifestyles and physical fitness through physical education lessons and the additional sporting activities provided.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Almost all of the parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, thought that their children are well taught.
- Teachers convey clear expectations of learning and behaviour and have established good relationships with the pupils. The pupils respond well to these expectations.
- Pupils know what they are expected to learn because the teacher discusses the purpose of the lesson with them. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to illustrate the main learning points.
- Teachers' clear explanations, instructions and demonstrations promote pupils' learning well. In an effective writing lesson, the teacher provided pupils with a good explanation and demonstration of how to write a narrative poem. Questions were used skilfully to check pupils' understanding of syllables, rhythm and rhyme. This clear guidance engaged the pupils and helped them in writing their own poem.
- Teachers use assessment information well to plan their teaching and provide interesting tasks which challenge the pupils and maintain their interest. Pupils make good gains in acquiring knowledge, deepening their understanding and applying skills. Just occasionally, work is not fully effective in extending the most able.
- Teaching and learning activities are well organised in the class of Reception children and pupils from Years 1 and 2. This helps to ensure that learning is well suited to the different groups and that time is used effectively. In a mathematics session, pupils in Years 1 and 2 made good progress as they created butterflies using modelling material and mathematics apparatus. They ensured that the shapes and patterns on the wings of the butterfly were symmetrical. Children in Reception worked well with the assistant in placing spots on their ladybird models. They reinforced their counting skills and were able to double small numbers.
- Teachers have not provided enough opportunities in the past for pupils to carry out investigations in mathematics using practical apparatus or for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects. They are beginning to provide more opportunities now, and this approach is having a positive impact on raising achievement in mathematics.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and provide good guidance and support, particularly for pupils who need additional help with literacy and numeracy. One-to-one support is used effectively to improve pupils' reading skills.
- Teachers' marking is helpful and provides praise and useful feedback. However, the use of targets to guide pupils' learning in reading, writing and mathematics is not consistent in all year groups. As a result, pupils are not always clear about what they are aiming for and how they can improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Children in Reception settle quickly into the school because of the strong relationships that adults establish with children. They enjoy the interesting learning activities provided. Children's behaviour is positive in the classroom and outside.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. In Years 1 to 6, pupils show a keen interest in their learning.

They are eager to participate in the activities provided. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and in the playing areas. Their positive attitudes to learning and their good behaviour contribute well to their progress.

- Throughout the school, pupils are courteous, friendly and considerate. They make good progress in their personal development and thrive in the school's positive and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils have developed a good understanding of different cultures and religions.
- The school helps pupils to develop positive personal qualities. For example, in a well-presented assembly, pupils discovered how 'Sports Relief' helps people in the United Kingdom and around the world. They were engrossed in a film clip of a swimmer training to swim a mile in open cold water. The pupils identified the qualities which contributed to the swimmer's success, including courage, determination, perseverance and training. They reflected on these qualities and were encouraged to take on new challenges themselves.
- All the parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children are happy at school, feel safe and are well looked after. These positive views reflect the findings of the inspection.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. As a result, pupils feel safe at school and well looked after. Discussions with pupils show that they have a clear understanding of bullying and its different forms, including name-calling and cyber-bullying. Pupils reported that bullying is rare and that there has been none recently. Should any bullying occur, they were confident that the headteacher and staff would sort out problems quickly.
- The school's records show that incidents of unacceptable behaviour do not happen often. The clear systems of rewards and sanctions are known and appreciated by the pupils.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average. Positive steps are taken to support families whose children have low attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides good leadership and conveys high expectations to pupils and staff. She and the team of staff promote good achievement and good teaching for pupils.
- Subject leadership roles are distributed effectively among the small number of teachers. Leaders are developing well and are engaged in checking pupils' performance and improving their areas of responsibility.
- Through the systematic checking of performance, leaders and governors have a clear overview of the school's strengths and development points. The findings of self-review are used well to inform action to bring about improvement.
- The quality of teaching and learning is checked regularly by the headteacher and local authority. There is a clear system for the appraisal of staff performance. Targets to improve teachers' practice and skills are clearly identified and linked to pupils' progress. Good support and training are provided where needed.
- The local authority has a clear overview of the school's performance. The improvement partner, a local headteacher, provides good support and challenge to the school.

- The curriculum provides an interesting range of learning activities to promote good achievement and good personal development for pupils. Provision for English is good and provision for mathematics is improving. Pupils receive high-quality musical tuition from a visiting specialist. There are no signs of discrimination in the school and all pupils have access to the full range of activities provided. Pupil premium funding has been properly allocated and used to raise the achievement of eligible pupils.
- The recent primary sports funding is used well to extend pupils' physical and sporting activities. Visiting specialist teachers and coaches help pupils develop skills well and enhance the skills of staff.
- The online survey, Parent View, shows that parents are pleased with the care and education provided. A number of parents travel a considerable distance to bring their children to Gaddesden Row.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Members of the governing body are supportive of the school. They show a clear understanding of pupils' attainment and progress. Governors are kept well informed about the quality of teaching and learning. They provide constructive challenge, particularly about the raising of achievement in mathematics. The governors are up to date on performance management procedures and ensure that promotion and pay awards are based on the progress that pupils make. They make sure that the pupil premium funding is used wisely and check the impact of the funding on pupils' progress. The governors have attended useful courses to help them in their role. All safeguarding requirements are met.

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	117101
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	431562

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	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matthew Beresford
Headteacher	Jo Easter
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2009
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