

Herne Bay Junior School

Kings Road, Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 5DA

Inspection dates 20–21 March 2014

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. It is not good because:

- Achievement is not yet good because the progress of pupils from their individual starting points is not rapid enough.
- Teachers do not always provide tasks that are sufficiently challenging to enable pupils to achieve the higher levels of attainment.
- The most-able pupils are not always moved on quickly enough to more challenging tasks so they can make even better progress.
- Pupils are not consistently helped to understand how to move to the next level in their learning.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to become better at using their skills so that they can read with deeper understanding.
- Subject leaders have yet to fully evaluate the impact new initiatives are having on pupils' progress.
- Leaders and governors have not fully addressed inconsistencies in teaching in order to improve pupils' progress at a fast enough pace.

The school has the following strengths:

- Pupils say they feel safe in school. The behaviour of pupils is good and they enjoy talking about their learning. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive.
- Leaders are now taking actions which are improving the quality of teaching so that pupils' progress is improving across the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well by the school. Pupils value the opportunities they have to support charitable work.
- The school makes effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, of which eight were observed jointly with senior leaders. In addition inspectors observed two class assemblies. Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' work in their books.
- Inspectors met with pupils and talked with them about their work. Meetings were also held with subject leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Documentation covering safeguarding, the management of performance of staff, behaviour and safety, attendance and checks on pupils' attainment and progress was reviewed.
- Inspectors took account of 110 responses from parents and carers to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 64 questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

Howard Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jackie Edwards

Additional Inspector

Christine Taylor

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support from the pupil premium funding, which is extra government support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those from service families, is average. In this school it is applicable to all three of these groups of pupils.
- When compared to national figures, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at school action, and the proportion at school action plus or who have a statement of educational needs, are both high.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to improve pupils' progress by:
 - introducing greater challenge more quickly for the most-able pupils so that they make the best possible progress
 - regularly checking the understanding of pupils to ensure tasks are sufficiently demanding to enable pupils to achieve the higher levels of attainment
 - ensuring pupils understand how to improve their work in order to move to the next level in their learning
 - developing pupils' ability to work out for themselves the meaning of a text so they read with deeper understanding
- Increase the impact of leaders, managers and governors, by:
 - ensuring subject leaders check that new initiatives have an impact on improving pupils' progress
 - strengthening the role of governors so that they hold leaders more accountable for the school's performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement over time has not been good enough. By the end of Year 6 the large majority of pupils reach the levels expected for their age in both English and mathematics. Although progress in writing improved in 2013, too few pupils made good progress in reading and mathematics.
- Achievement for the most-able pupils has not been consistent. These pupils are not as successful in attaining the higher Level 5 when compared to similar pupils nationally, especially in reading. This is because they are not always moved on quickly enough during lessons into more challenging tasks so they can make the best possible progress.
- Pupils enjoy reading and make good use of the school's attractive and well-resourced library. Pupils are especially keen on the work of David Walliams. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to 'read between the lines' and work things out for themselves in order to read with deeper understanding; consequently their progress in reading is not as consistently good as in writing.
- Pupils are now making rapid progress across all year groups so that gaps in their learning and skills are now closing quickly. This is especially so since September 2013 and school checks on pupils' progress indicate these improvements are being sustained in all subjects.
- The attainment of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to the national average. As with other pupils, they are now making better progress and becoming even more successful in their learning because of the appropriate support they receive within lessons.
- The gap in attainment for all groups of pupils eligible for free school meals is closing. By the end of Year 6 in national tests in 2013 they were behind their peers by approximately eight months in mathematics and reading. However, their progress was better in writing and school evidence shows these pupils are now making more rapid progress in all subjects and year groups.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not consistently promoted good learning and progress as pupils move through the school. Consequently, pupils' achievement has not been good enough by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers do not always assess pupils' learning and reshape activities to extend their knowledge and understanding. Consequently, work is not always challenging enough because tasks for pupils are not routinely adjusted to enable them to work toward achieving the higher levels of attainment.
- Teachers do not routinely help pupils understand how to improve their work and move to the next level in their learning. They encourage pupils effectively to talk about how to best approach tasks, but do not always link this to pupils' learning targets or the skills they need to develop in particular subjects.
- The quality of teaching has improved in the past year. The actions taken by leaders to address weak teaching are now leading to pupils making better progress. The quality of pupils' work in their exercise books reflects this improving picture.
- Where pupils learn well, teachers skilfully question them to deepen their understanding. For example, in one Year 4 English lesson the teacher referred to pupils' work on the 'working wall' and used this effectively to discuss with pupils how they could best apply their literacy skills in order to analyse a text.
- At its best, teaching builds effectively on pupils' previous learning. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson on problem solving, pupils revisited their use of key ideas to explain their work and apply their numeracy skills more accurately as they explored the tasks set for them.
- Teachers make good use of ICT to support pupils' learning. Use of electronic tablets is especially

effective in supporting pupils with additional learning needs, as seen in a Year 5 session where pupils were using conjunctions competently in their writing.

- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress during lessons because of the support provided by additional adults. This is especially effective when the adults work with individuals and groups within the classroom.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are happy to engage in their work and talk with each other about their learning. They are polite and confident when engaging in conversation with visitors to their school. When teachers make learning interesting and challenging, pupils are highly enthusiastic and have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning, but this is not yet consistent in all classes.
- Pupils show positive attitudes wherever they are throughout the school. During lunchtimes the dining hall is calm and pupils make good use of the open spaces outside and show respect for the resources available to them. Pupils say they appreciate the opportunities they have to take on responsibilities. Some act as 'peer mediators' and play leaders and others are 'reading champions' who support younger pupils in their reading. Pupils also help run the school's library and are extensively involved in supporting charities, including sponsoring a child living in Brazil.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils confirm they feel safe and that teachers are supportive of them. Pupils say that racism is not an issue and that other forms of discrimination, including all forms of bullying, are very rare and when these do occur, teachers deal with such instances effectively.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe using the internet. They value using information technology to tackle tasks set for their homework and say that cyber bullying is not an issue for them.
- Attendance is average. The work of the school in this area is having an impact. The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, confirm their child is happy and feels safe at the school.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken actions which have brought improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, especially within the last 10 months. However, although gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are closing quickly, these have yet to be reflected in national tests. Consequently, achievement over time is not yet good enough.
- The role of subject leaders has still to be developed further. Although these middle leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and pupils' work, they have yet to fully evaluate the impact new initiatives are having on pupils' progress.
- The regular monitoring of the quality of teaching refers closely to pupils' progress. It takes account of teachers' performance targets and informs decisions about their pay and career progression. Staff are wholeheartedly supportive of school leaders and value the bespoke training and coaching they receive to improve their classroom practice.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's performance. It has provided effective support which has been well received by school leaders. This has had an impact on improving the quality of teaching so that the school can now demonstrate strong capacity to sustain the rapid improvements in pupils' attainment and progress.
- Equality of opportunity is given high priority and provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is comprehensive. Additional provision also includes work with families and counselling. As a result, pupils who were at risk of underachieving are now as successful as their peers.
- Sport is especially valued across the school. Pupils take part in a range of sporting activities which include hockey, netball and football. The primary school sports funding is being used

appropriately to develop the quality of teaching in physical education so that opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of sports are having a marked impact on their health and well-being.

- Subjects are effectively planned. These ensure pupils' knowledge and understanding are being extended in ways which bring about a coherent development of their skills as they move through the school. Pupils say they enjoy their learning and the homework tasks they undertake. Extra activities include a popular chess club run by school governors.
- Pupils have a variety of opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences. These include the school choir, which performs in large national venues, and playing musical instruments such as the piano, drums and violin. Pupils are very active within their local community and have helped design a play area on the seafront and participated in a 'welly walk' to support charitable work in Africa.
- All aspects of safeguarding are effectively covered. Rigorous risk assessments are in place covering all aspects of school routines, including educational visits.
- The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed they would recommend this school to another parent or carer.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are active within the school and make regular visits to look at lessons and observe how new initiatives are being implemented. They have developed the school library and enhanced the provision of parent consultation events. Governors ensure that both the performance of the headteacher and checks on teachers' pay and progression are routinely monitored. Governors have also undertaken a range of training covering aspects of their work. However, their level of challenge to school leaders has not addressed inconsistencies in the school's performance well enough to drive forward improvements in pupils' progress at a faster pace. The school's budget is well managed and finances are secure. The primary school sports funding has been appropriately allocated through the work of sports coaches to develop the capacity of teachers to deliver physical education. Governors ensure that discrimination is not tolerated within the school and that the pupil premium funding has been allocated appropriately. They check that this is having an impact on the achievement of these pupils.

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	118852
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	441045

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	480
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Winkworth
Headteacher	Jonathan Dunn
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 November 2010
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