

Breachwood Green Junior Mixed and Infant School

Oxford Road, Breachwood Green, Hitchin, SG4 8NP

Inspection dates 1–2 May 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement Key Stage 1 is good and attainment is above average.
- Due to the high standard of provision, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start.
- Achievement at Key Stage 2 is good for those pupils who have been attending school for the whole key stage. Progress across the school in writing is excellent.
- The teaching gives pupils a great enjoyment of learning. Pupils who need extra help do well because they receive good support.
- Pupils and families value this school highly. This is because it is a happy and caring school where pupils thrive and achieve well.
- Interesting activities are provided and give pupils an extensive range of memorable experiences. Pupils develop a love of music and sport.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is exemplary. High levels of care and strong relationships enable them to feel very safe. Pupils spontaneously help others in lessons and around the school.
- Attendance is consistently above average and reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils take great pride in their school and like the recently improved facilities.
- The headteacher's leadership sets the positive tone for the whole school. Leaders at all levels share her vision for bringing out the best in every pupil.
- Senior leaders, including governors, work well as a team. Their actions have successfully improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Overall, the rate of progress in mathematics across Key Stage 2, particularly for the more-able pupils, is slower than in writing. Marking in mathematics does not consistently help pupils to improve their work.
- Some subject and other leaders are at an early stage in developing their responsibilities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector observed pupils in lessons, at play, at lunch, in the celebration assembly and as they moved around school.
- Discussions were held with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector held meetings with groups of pupils, listened to pupils read and checked reading progress records. In addition, records of school council meetings were reviewed.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including records of the quality of teaching and of pupils' attainment and progress, the school's view of its performance and the school development plan. In addition, records of governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and reports from the school improvement adviser were reviewed.
- The inspector took account of the 36 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 10 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- Numbers in cohorts vary considerably from year to year. There are four classes. Children in Reception and some from Year 1 are taught as one class. The remaining pupils from Year 1 and those from Year 2 form another class. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are taught as one class and those in Years 5 and 6 as another.
- Only a small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A higher-than-average proportion of pupils join the school partway through their primary education.
- Nearly half the current teaching staff have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school has more recently built a school hall, which also serves as a purpose-built space for physical education and other whole-school activities, and a new library and information and communication technology (ICT) suite.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils in Key Stage 2 make the same rapid progress in mathematics as they do in writing by making sure that:
 - the most-able pupils are set sufficiently challenging activities which enable them to make faster progress
 - teachers' marking consistently identifies how pupils can improve further and teachers check that pupils improve their work in response to this feedback.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by developing skills of the new subject and other leaders in measuring pupils' progress and taking action to raise achievement in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Although children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are typical for their age, a growing number start with weaknesses in their speaking and listening skills. The school has put systems in place to support these specific learning needs. Children get a very good start in all aspects of their learning. They make good progress, particularly in their personal development, because staff settle children quickly into learning. Many reach or exceed a good level of development by the start of Year 1.
- Pupils continue to make good progress across Key Stage 1. They reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above and sometimes well above the national average.
- Achievement in reading is good across the school. Results in the Year 1 phonic screening check (a check on pupils' knowledge and understanding of letters and the sounds they make), for the last two years have been above average. School data show a higher proportion are on track to do so this year. Across the school, pupils have many opportunities to read and explore books; they regularly read for pleasure and for research purposes.
- Achievement in writing has been strong for several years and many pupils produce imaginative writing. More-able pupils perform especially well in writing.
- In recent years, achievement in Key Stage 2 declined, but the results of national tests in 2013, and the school's own records for current pupils show that this decline has been reversed. Pupils are once again making good progress.
- Although attainment is not as strong in mathematics and progress has been weaker in the past, improvements were seen in the 2013 tests. However, despite the significant improvements in mathematics standards overall, not all of the most-able pupils reach the standards they are capable of because these brighter pupils do not always make fast enough progress.
- The pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This demonstrates good progress from their starting points and reflects the school's commitment to ensuring that every pupil is given an equal chance now to reach their potential.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress, and some do even better because their different needs are managed exceptionally well.
- The school provides very good support for the very few pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium so that they make similar progress to their peers. There were too few eligible pupils in Year 6 last year to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individual pupils.
- Effective support is given to pupils who join partway through Key Stages 1 or 2, so that they settle quickly and make good progress.
- Across the whole school, pupils receive qualified coaching in many sporting activities to ensure that they develop good skills and healthy lifestyles.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good teaching enables most pupils in all year groups to learn well and make good progress. Excellent relationships within the classroom ensure that pupils have a very positive attitude to their work and learn new skills quickly and confidently.
- Teachers have high expectations, possess good subject knowledge and provide rich and engaging experiences for pupils. As a result, pupils are eager to learn. This was seen in Years 1 and 2, where pupils were highly motivated to write a story based on a picture showing giraffes leaning through a window to eat the lunch that the school's headteacher had carefully prepared for her guests. When writing, pupils did not hesitate to help each other if they were struggling and they clearly enjoyed learning from each other.
- Usually, learning activities are tailored to the interests of pupils, which encourages good enjoyment of learning. This is particularly the case in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where children benefit from a wide range of highly organised and purposeful activities. An exciting environment inspires learning, both inside and out. Children are skilfully managed by adults to promote creativity and independence while developing early reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- The teaching of writing is excellent overall and teachers have high expectations of pupils, who are encouraged to write in a wide variety of subjects which adds to the purpose of the work they do and raises their achievement. Effective marking is seen in literacy books.
- Reading is taught effectively. Teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is given high importance throughout the school and helps pupils to read unfamiliar words. Teachers actively encourage pupils to read at home for pleasure.
- At Key Stage 2, the teaching of mathematics has undergone a complete overhaul and this has resulted in significant gains in achievement. Nevertheless, some differences in the quality of learning in mathematics remain.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. The best marking consistently gives pupils advice on how to improve. However, the quality of marking across classes is in mathematics variable. Sometimes it is not made clear to pupils how they can improve their work, as well as that, when guidance is given, pupils do not always act upon this in order to improve their work.
- Work in mathematics is not always adapted quickly enough when pupils find it too easy. This means that sometimes pupils are not fully challenged, especially the most able.
- Throughout the school, teachers and teaching assistants work together very effectively. The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils eligible for additional support through the pupil premium, are identified and pupils are given support where required.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. From an early age, young children learn to value each other and their school community. There is an exceptional atmosphere of mutual respect throughout the school.
- Lunchtime is a very social occasion enabling pupils to interact happily together. The older pupils

enjoy taking responsibility for the younger children and act as outstanding role models. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 train as play leaders to encourage younger pupils to keep active at lunchtimes.

- Pupils were observed to have an extremely good attitude towards learning and behave exceptionally well both in lessons and around the school. School records and staff questionnaires indicate that this is typical. Consistently above-average attendance illustrates these highly positive attitudes.
- Pupils are especially proud of their school and highly appreciative of the improvements made to the well-resourced library and ICT suite.
- During lessons, pupils become highly engaged in learning due to the stimulating activities presented to them. Pupils work well in groups and as partners, collaborating with others and sharing ideas.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel extremely safe and learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. All parents agree that their children are well cared for at school.
- Pupils said there is no bullying. They have an excellent understanding of different forms of bullying, such as name-calling, and are extremely confident that they could turn to any adult if they felt this was happening.
- Pupils' experiences are increased through an impressive range of trips taking them beyond their local community. Residential trips and taking part in many sporting competitions and musical events ensure that pupils gain first-hand experience in how to stay safe in locations beyond their local community.
- The school uses the new sports funding to provide a very wide range of sporting activities before, after and during school. These are well attended and contribute effectively to the pupils' health and well-being. The sports hall is used well; it serves effectively as a purpose-built space for physical education and other whole-school activities.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is very committed to the school and community and has a clear vision for the school and its future development. She is held in high regard by the pupils, parents and staff. Comments on all the staff questionnaires returned indicated a high level of confidence in the school's leadership. Staff morale is high. All facets of leadership, including governance, are relentlessly focused on improving achievement still further.
- School leaders have an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing, as they thoroughly evaluate the school's performance. Leaders correctly identify the school's strengths and the right priorities for further development. They have maintained the strengths identified at the previous inspection and improved identified weaknesses.
- Additionally, school facilities have been greatly enhanced through the building of a sports hall, a new library, improvements to spaces used for music and an Information, Communication Technology suite. The school has also remodelled areas to create a meeting room, administrative offices and new corridors which improve the general flow throughout the school.

- Senior leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress is closely tracked. Leaders and the governing body ensure that teachers' salary increases are linked to pupils' progress. Teachers' professional development is closely linked to school priorities.
- The leadership team has prioritised the development of an effective team of subject and other leaders, which is capable of contributing to school improvement. Some members are relatively new to their roles, and there is more to be done in order to spread the workload and raise expectations even higher.
- Through the curriculum, pupils develop a good understanding of different faiths and cultures, and show respect and consideration for others. The school has developed links with a school in Koforidua, East Ghana, sending out resources and, more recently, letters from the pupils.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to think about and express their feelings and to reflect on their learning and behaviour. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well across the curriculum and this makes an excellent contribution to the positive atmosphere in school. The singing heard in assembly and music lessons was inspirational.
- Parents are welcomed to school to meet staff and discuss their children's progress. They are unanimous in saying they would recommend this school.
- Local authority engagement has been light touch but effective reflecting the school's good performance over time.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very effective. Governors are aware of the school's strengths and future developments because they visit school as often as they can and receive accurate, detailed reports from school leaders. Governors have a good understanding of data showing pupils' achievement and know how this compares with that of other schools. This enables them to challenge school leaders effectively. Governors are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and promoting good relationships. Finances are managed effectively to minimise the impact on the budget arising from fluctuations in the number of pupils on roll. Governors ensure that the pupil premium funding is used to benefit the pupils for whom it is intended. Governors have effective arrangements to make sure that pay awards are linked to teachers' and leaders' performance and that the procedures to measure performance are thorough. Governors undertake statutory duties, making sure that safeguarding meets requirements so that pupils and staff are safe. Roles within the governing body are clearly defined and they willingly undertake training.

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	117119
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	444062

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	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elisabeth Greet
Headteacher	Rosemarie Bethel
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2010
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