

# Hamstead Junior School

Hamstead Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 5BE

**Inspection dates** 13–14 May 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement dropped in 2012 and 2013, during a period in which there were staff changes and absence.
- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good in all classes and year groups and, as a result, rates of progress vary across the school.
- Marking does not always give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work, and some teachers do not give enough attention to ensuring that work is tidy.
- Pupils are sometimes confused by the targets they are given.
- Some of the work pupils are given is too easy, and sometimes work is too hard.
- Writing requires improvement. Pupils are not developing their skills in writing longer pieces of work
- Pupils are not practising or improving their writing skills in different subjects.

### The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have a very accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are taking decisive action to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards, and both are rising rapidly.
- Pupils' progress in reading and mathematics has accelerated and is now good.
- Behaviour in and around the school is consistently good.
- Pupils are eager to learn and they are attentive in lessons. They feel safe in school and they enjoy being there.
- The wide range of extra activities help to widen opportunities, and help more vulnerable pupils grow in confidence.
- Governors are effective in holding the school to account.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or part lessons. Seven of these observations were carried out jointly by inspectors and senior leaders. Inspectors listened to pupils read and observed playtime and lunchtime activities.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, senior and subject leaders, three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the 48 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also spoke to parents at the start of the school day.
- The views of staff were analysed through the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documents, including information about safeguarding, pupils' progress and attainment, leaders' evaluations of the school's strengths and weaknesses and their plans for improvements. Inspectors looked at records of leaders' checks on teaching and the management of teachers' performance. The team also considered the school's record-keeping of incidents of poor behaviour and bullying as well as information on attendance and risk assessments.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of pupils' books from different year groups.

## Inspection team

David Evans, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jane Brothers	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is broadly average. Pupil premium is additional funding for looked after children and pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs supported through school action is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been staff changes, including the deputy headteacher, and several periods of sick leave since the last inspection.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
  - the work teachers set is at the right level for pupils' different abilities
  - teachers' marking shows pupils what to do next to improve their work
  - where teachers set targets, they are consistent in their approach
  - teachers use the skills of teaching assistants more effectively throughout the whole lesson.
- Improve progress in writing by:
  - ensuring that teachers give close attention to pupils' presentation of their work
  - enabling pupils to develop their writing skills through writing longer pieces of work
  - checking the quality of pupils' writing across the subjects they do.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, over time, the progress of pupils has not been fast enough. Though improving, progress is not yet consistently good across and within year groups.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 declined in 2012 and 2013 because some pupils did not make enough progress to reach the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Better teaching is now helping pupils to make accelerated progress in mathematics and reading.
- Achievement in writing is not as strong. Pupils are not good at writing at length to develop their ideas, for example in subjects other than English, and so are overly reliant on worksheets for recording their work. Where teachers set high standards for pupils' presentation of their written work, pupils respond with work that is clearly laid out and with careful handwriting. However, not all teachers set high enough expectations for neatness.
- Pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium do not consistently make good progress. The results of the 2013 tests show that there were gaps between the attainment of eligible pupils and their classmates. In reading, they were over a year behind their classmates, while in writing and mathematics they were over four terms behind others in their class. Currently the gap is narrower and those who receive additional funding are sometimes ahead of their classmates.
- Pupils' skills and confidence in reading are carefully developed as the school promotes a love of reading and books. When pupils have difficulty with reading, they are provided with effective help and support.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has improved sharply and is now good. This is the result of changes made to the organisation of the daily mathematics lessons, the increased opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects like science, and the deployment of specialist teaching in Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. They are making better progress than in the past because their learning is now planned and structured better and they receive good support from teaching assistants. Focused teaching groups are helping to accelerate their progress, and learning is now increasingly pitched at a level more appropriate to their needs.
- The progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language varies between classes. Pupils of minority ethnic heritage and those who speak English as an additional language generally make similar progress to their classmates.
- Able pupils' results last year showed that they made better progress than pupils of other abilities. However, more-able pupils currently in the school are not always fully challenged because they are given work to do that is too easy for them.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching has not resulted in consistently good progress by all pupils currently in the school. Though teaching is improving, sometimes work is still not sufficiently challenging. There remain

weaknesses in marking and in the way teachers use the support of teaching assistants.

- Some pupils told inspectors that the work is sometimes too easy for them. This was reflected in some pupils' books. In a few lessons, work was not always pitched at the right level to make sure that different ability groups all made good progress.
- Work is marked regularly, but comments do not always give pupils enough help to understand how they can improve the work they have done. Teachers set pupils individual targets but they do not adopt a consistent approach to this so pupils are sometimes confused by the targets they are given.
- Teaching assistants are not always used well enough to support pupils in class. They are not supporting and extending pupils' learning to good effect throughout the lesson. As a result, some pupils do not make as much progress as they should.
- As a result of the support given by senior leaders, the quality of teaching is now improving and joint observations conducted during the inspection show that it is having an impact on improving pupils' progress, especially in Year 6.
- There are very positive relationships between staff and pupils which results in mutual respect. A typical comment by a pupil during the inspection was, 'Our suggestions are put into practice and we have a voice.'
- In mathematics in Year 6, high expectations of learning and behaviour were demonstrated and tasks stretched pupils of all abilities. Pupils relished the challenge of trying to solve triangle sums. They responded well to probing questions.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are eager to learn and parents report that they rush to school in the mornings; this enjoyment is reflected in their above-average attendance.
- Pupils get on well with each other in class and during break times and they show enormous respect for each other's cultures and faiths. They are polite; they welcome visitors to their school and were keen to talk to inspectors.
- Pupils enjoy the many opportunities they have to take responsibilities as school councillors and playtime buddies. They also enjoy the many visits they make to places of interest, and their enterprise work helps to boost their self-confidence and sense of teamwork.
- In lessons, behaviour is typically good. Though some pupils lose a little concentration when tasks are too easy or too hard, there is no disruption.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.
- Pupils feel safe and they tell inspectors that they know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They know how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Pupils display a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say bullying is not a problem in the school.

- Evidence from the school's own surveys and from Parent View confirm that parents hold positive views on the standard of behaviour and safety in school.

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

- The headteacher and senior leaders are relentless in their drive for improvement and passionate for pupils to achieve well. Despite significant challenges posed by staff illness and changes, they have established clear systems of accountability to eliminate any underachievement. The governing body and local authority have provided good-quality support when decisive actions have been taken to bring about change.
- Although, in the past, procedures for assessing pupils' performance have not been rigorous enough, a new assessment system is now enabling teachers to have a much more accurate understanding of how to assess their pupils. This is leading to work which, in most classes, better meets the specific learning needs and capabilities of pupils.
- The deputy headteacher and senior leaders have a very good understanding of pupils' performance. They work as an effective team and track pupils' progress in detail. Their insightful scrutiny of data has led to more rapid improvement and the school is now well placed to meet its more ambitious targets.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and based on thorough analysis of a wide range of data.
- Initiatives to improve mathematics have resulted in good levels of progress for pupils. The deputy headteacher, who is the mathematics leader, has observed lessons, led work scrutiny and evaluated progress data very thoroughly. The literacy leader has been equally proactive in analysing data, but he has not yet monitored the use of literacy and writing across other subject areas.
- Leaders recognise that, although the quality of teaching is improving, there is still inconsistency in its effectiveness, particularly with regard to improving writing.
- The performance of teachers is managed well. There are systems to challenge staff about their work. Teachers recognise that they are accountable for ensuring that pupils make better progress. Monitoring of pupils' progress is increasingly robust and regular, and includes book reviews, progress meetings, and informal and formal observations of lessons.
- The pupil premium funding is used to provide extra literacy and numeracy support. Senior leaders are focused on ensuring that additional resources are targeted at potentially under-achieving pupils, so they make better progress.
- The primary school sport funding is used well. Leaders have employed specialist sports coaches in order to develop staff skills in teaching physical education and to increase pupils' involvement in different sports. The deputy headteacher has produced an effective analysis, showing the good impact of this funding on pupils' self-esteem and sporting prowess.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a good balance of subjects and some memorable experiences. It is enhanced by specialist activities such as sports, learning French and learning to play a musical instrument. Good partnerships with parents and the local community are contributing to parents becoming more involved in their children's learning.

- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development extremely well. The strong emphasis on partnership work provides opportunities for pupils to learn from professional visitors and to visit places of interest. Pupils display great respect for other cultures, they are involved in links to other countries and their grasp of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom is good.
- The local authority is offering an appropriate level of support to help leaders and managers to raise achievement through checks on the school's effectiveness and guidance from specialist advisers.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors hold the school to account. They know the school well and they are fully involved in many aspects of school life. Under the Chair's dynamic and astute leadership, governors have produced a thorough self-review and a detailed action plan whose impact can clearly be seen in school improvements.
  - Governors visit the school often, and they observe learning taking place so that they can see the differences that recent changes are making. This gives them the necessary insight in order to drive forward further improvements. Governors robustly challenge the headteacher to improve pupils' progress.
  - Governors set high expectations for the work done by staff. They are well aware of the quality of teaching. Performance management is now kept under closer review and there is a clear understanding that pay is linked to staff performance.
  - The governors manage the school's finances well. They work closely to their budget so that they can maintain the levels of staffing and provision of activities. They check that the pupil premium funding and primary school sport funding are used well and are having a positive impact.

## 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>	103895
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	443862

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>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	232
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lynn Howard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tim Bowen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 3571557
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