

Redbourn Junior School

Long Cott, Redbourn, St Albans, AL3 7EX

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Require 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

- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. This means not all pupils make the progress they should, especially in mathematics.
- Attainment levels in mathematics have fallen over the past two years. Too few pupils made better than the expected progress in mathematics and to a lesser extent in reading and writing.
- More-able pupils are not set hard enough work in some classes. Hence, they too do not make the best possible progress and reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Marking in some classes does not tell pupils how to improve their work.
- Pupils do not know their targets well enough and are unsure how to make good progress.
- When activities are not interesting enough to motivate pupils to work hard, or work is too easy, a few pupils lose concentration.
- Some leaders with responsibility for subjects are very new to their positions and do not yet have an overview of teaching and how well pupils are doing in their subjects.
- Although systems for managing the performance of teachers are in place, targets set for teachers are not always strongly focused on improving pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- There is some effective teaching, particularly in Year 6 especially in English. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average in reading and writing.
- The school provides good support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Pupil's progress is now accelerating because leaders are check very carefully on progress. A higher proportion in Year 6 than in previous years is already achieving the higher levels in both English and mathematics.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are courteous and polite to both adults and to each other. They say they are safe and well cared for.
- Many opportunities for spiritual, moral and social development are provided, especially through assemblies and the end of term performances.
- Music, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education are strengths of the school.
- Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning and looked at pupils' work in all year groups. They visited 17 classes. Three were observed jointly with the head teacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and both senior and middle leaders to discuss the progress that groups of pupils make throughout the school. They analysed the school's information on attainment and progress. An inspector met with three governors.
- The team examined records of the local authority's involvement with the school and met with a local authority representative.
- The views of parents and carers were considered from the school's own recent parent survey and the 75 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View. Parents also spoke to an inspector in the playground. All views were taken into account.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, chatted to them in the dining hall and in the playground and in a formal group.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lessons and at various times around the school including lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at documentation including that related to safeguarding, behaviour and the school's development planning. They also looked at attendance figures and at the school's website.

Inspection team

Gillian Bosschaert, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Graham Gossage

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average size junior school.
- The vast majority of pupils transfer from the adjacent infant school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational special needs is below national averages.
- The proportion supported through school action is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- During the past three years there have been a significant number of staff changes and of periods of absence due to illness within the leadership team.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching so that all pupils make good or better progress in all subjects but particularly in mathematics by:
 - using the school's assessment information better to plan learning activities which are not too hard or too easy for all ability groups, but specially for the most able pupils
 - ensuring that teachers check pupils' understanding and progress during the lesson and make adjustments accordingly so that all time is used effectively and pupils move on more quickly to harder work
 - ensuring consistency across the school in the quality of marking so that pupils are clear about how to improve their work, know their targets and understand how to move forward in their learning
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills
 - identifying targets to improve the quality of teaching that are linked to pupil progress, especially in mathematics.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - making sure subject leaders undertake regular checks on the quality of teaching and pupil progress so that they are better able to identify what teachers need to do to improve further
 - identifying measurable targets in improvement planning with specific time scales in order to accurately assess the effectiveness of the school's improvement work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is not consistently good across the school and they have not attained as well as might be expected, particularly in mathematics and reading, for the past two years. Although pupils are making better progress this year and particularly in Year 6, this is not yet consistently good across all year groups in all subjects.
- Since the previous inspection the attainment of pupils in English has been above average. Although standards in mathematics had been falling over a period of two years it was only in 2013 that attainment fell below average. School information shows that this dip has been arrested and progress is improving.
- Pupils join the school with skills and abilities that are above those found nationally. Their progress has been variable across the school in recent years. In particular too few make enough progress to reach the higher levels especially in mathematics. Pupils sometimes spend too long going over number facts that they already know and do not spend enough time applying their knowledge. This slow progress down.
- In 2013, at the end of Year 6, pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium funding were five terms behind their classmates in reading, three terms behind them in writing and two terms behind them in mathematics. School tracking information shows that this gap is much smaller this year. This is because these pupils now make at least similar progress to their classmates and sometimes better.
- Pupils say they enjoy reading, are able to discuss a number of authors and have favourite books. All pupils spoken to read at home to a parent, brother or sister. Books are at the appropriate levels and pupils are encouraged to read frequently. Most pupils reading with fluency and accuracy.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their lower starting points because of the extra help and guidance they receive because work is carefully matched to their needs.
- The additional sports funding is being used effectively. The school has employed a teacher, a physical education specialist, who has increased the range of activities offered to pupils and enhanced their skills significantly. Participation in sporting activities has increased both in the school and in local and district events where they now excel.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it varies too much between classes. School performance data, the work in pupils' books and observations of pupils' learning show that teaching is not strong enough in some classes to ensure rapid and sustained progress across the school.
- Teaching is not consistently good because not all teachers have persistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve as they move through the school. Time is not always used effectively. Sometimes too much time is spent going over what pupils already know rather than moving on to new ideas and learning quickly. However, in Year 6, the teacher's expectation in the teaching of Romeo and Juliet is high and pupils rise to the challenge. High quality work is produced. The teacher is passionate for her subject is infectious and transfers to the pupils who show great

enthusiasm for Shakespeare.

- Teachers do not always use their assessments well enough to plan work which secures good rates of progress. As a result, sometimes pupils, particularly the most able find the work too easy. Moreover they are not set harder work so that they move on in their learning as quickly as they could do.
- Marking is regular, but sometimes it is not sufficiently informative. Consequently pupils are not always clear about their targets or how to improve their work in some classes. Where learning is most effective, work is marked well. Pointers are given on how to improve work and any dialogue between teacher and pupil is carefully followed through.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and are eager to improve their work. Only when the activities are less interesting do a few become restless. Often this is when the work is too repetitive or if it is too easy. This is especially the case in mathematics when number facts that are already known are repeated to the whole class and not just the group who need this repetition.
- Teaching assistants are generally deployed effectively. They contribute well to pupils' progress especially in small group work where the work is well tailored to their needs with the result that these pupils achieve well.
- Homework is set regularly. It links closely to pupils' work in school and supports their overall learning well. Pupils are often asked to do work which develops their independence, for instance by carrying out research or designing and making something related to their class-work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of the pupils is good. In class the vast majority of pupils respond well to teachers' good use of praise and encouragement. Even when teaching is less stimulating and a few pupils become restless for short periods they do not disturb the learning of others.
- In and around the school, in assembly, in the playground and in the lunch hall pupils behave very sensibly. Older pupils take responsibility for working the overhead projector and the music deck for assembly. Pupils fully understand the rewards and sanctions and willingly discuss the 'Golden Ladder' which is used to give and take away time towards 'Golden Time' which is the very popular additional playtime at the end of the week.
- The relationships between pupils and adults and pupils and pupils are good. Pupils listen well to adults and are able to discuss sensibly with each other what they are doing during activities.
- The school's work to keep the pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are fully aware of different forms of bullying and learn about internet safety. They say they get on with each other and that the incidence of bullying is rare. They have a good understanding of risks and know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils who spoke to an inspector confirmed that they feel safe and well cared for. Parents too, confirm that their children are kept safe and that bullying is rare.
- Attendance is improving and is now average. Behaviour over time has improved and there has been no reoccurrence of poor behaviour following the last short term temporary exclusions at the beginning of the year.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- School leaders have not yet ensured good progress in every year group, particularly for the most-able pupils. Although they have made clear improvements in the quality of teaching, too much still requires improvement.
- New appointments in English and mathematics have strengthened the senior leadership team's capacity to secure further improvements. Nevertheless, although they have identified the right priorities, improvement planning lacks measurable pupil progress targets. Furthermore, there are no specific time scales for completion of improvement work. As a result leaders are not always able to accurately assess the impact of their actions.
- Many subject leaders are new to their roles, and as a result they are not yet holding teachers to account for the progress pupils make in their subject areas. New initiatives in the teaching of mathematics have still to impact on pupils' progress because they do not focus urgently enough on the components of good and outstanding teaching. However there are some good examples of subject leaders offering training to teachers as well as coaching them within the classroom setting, for example in English. Consequently, progress in reading and writing is improving substantially.
- Targets to improve the quality of teaching are too general. The main focus is not always on pupils' achievement. This again means that it is not possible to measure accurately the rate or effectiveness of the improvement work.
- Subjects have natural links to English and mathematics through the topics taught which support pupils' understanding in these areas. For example, Year 3 has the topic 'The World Cup' which links with data handling based on the area and the perimeter of a football pitch. Music, ICT and physical education are taught by specialist teachers and are strengths of the school. The singing in assembly and later in the school hall certainly reinforces this. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is developed well through such activities, the visits programme and through assemblies and topics.
- Learning throughout the school is enhanced by a programme of visitors to the school, out-of-school visits and trips including residential visits in Year 5 and Year 6. The village is used to provide learning outside of the classroom. For example, visits to the local church. Pupils in Year 5 are taken to Young Mariners base at Lea Valley where they stay for three days and Year 6 go to Isle of Wight outdoor centre where they engage in outdoor and adventurous activities. Year 4 have a sleep over in school. These first hand experiences enhance pupils understanding of being safe and staying safe as well as widening their learning experiences.
- Parents are welcomed into the school and benefit from workshops for English and mathematics. These are well attended, as is the 'Fantastic Finish' event for topics to which parents are invited. These all help parents to feel involved and to understand their child's work and progress.
- The local authority has supported the school well, for example in helping to moderate of pupils' work. Training has been given to teachers on good and better teaching and support for the headteacher with school self evaluation and improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well and are clear about their responsibilities. They are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and regularly visit the school to check progress. They are involved in producing the school development plan and set aside a strategy day each year for this purpose. Governors have looked at pupils' books and can see improvements but

are also aware that further improvements can be made. The governing body has played a keen role in the recent review of the school's behaviour policy and actively carries out its statutory duties with regard to behaviour and safety of pupils in the school. Health and safety checks occur regularly. Governors have effectively overseen the use of pupil premium funding ensured that it is spent on supporting eligible pupils and know how it is making a difference. Finances are secure.

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	117288
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	444006

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Collins
Headteacher	Allyson Woodhouse
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2008
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