

Whitehall Junior School

Cowley Road, Uxbridge, UB8 2LX

Inspection dates 16–17 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders and governors have ensured that there has been good progress since the last inspection.
- Standards in mathematics have risen rapidly over the last three years, so that by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is above average. Overall standards in reading and writing are average. The numbers of pupils securing the higher levels in reading and writing have risen recently and are above average.
- Teaching is consistently good. Systems to check pupils' progress are robust and carefully targeted support is provided for pupils who are at risk of falling behind other pupils.
- Support staff, who work with pupils in need of extra help, make a strong contribution to pupils' successful learning.
- Pupils typically behave well in class and around the school. They are polite, friendly and respectful to adults and to each other. Pupils say the school is a safe and caring place.
- Effective planning and support for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and cultural development are at the heart of the school's success. Pupils of differing backgrounds play and learn well together.
- The wide variety of themes and activities provided by the school, including the after-school clubs and visits, ensure that pupils develop skills in a broad range of subjects and are well prepared for their next stage of education.
- The school enjoys a good partnership with a 'mini-cluster partnership' of four other schools and this is helping to drive improvements.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school and effectively challenge leaders. In addition, they provide effective support to ensure the school continues to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A minority of pupils do not make sufficiently rapid gains in writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning and looked at pupils’ work, including some from the previous academic year. They observed 16 parts of lessons and visited many subjects across the curriculum. Three parts of lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher. Inspectors also discussed the school’s evaluation of the quality of teaching and visited three assemblies.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils and listened to pupils read. Pupils’ behaviour was observed in lessons and at playtime.
- Inspectors looked at documentation such as policies, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour, and the school’s development planning. They looked at attendance figures, records of behaviour incidents, and at the school’s website.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, 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 the Chair of Governors and three other members of the governing body.
- The team examined the records of the local authority’s involvement with the school and spoke with a local authority representative by telephone.
- Inspectors considered parents’ views of the school through informal discussions before school and the school’s own recent parental survey. They also considered the 40 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspectors also took into account the views of the 29 staff who completed the staff questionnaire. The team also talked to staff during the inspection.

Inspection team

Lesley Leak, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Bimla Thakur	Additional Inspector
Zahid Aziz	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. A significant building programme has recently been completed, to accommodate the expansion to four forms of entry by September 2016.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through the pupil premium is higher than the national average. The additional government funding is for children who are looked after and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is well above the national average. Approximately 10% of this group are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- Many children join and leave the school at various points other than the usual times.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school is a member of 'QUEST', a 'mini-cluster partnership', arranged with four other schools to share good practice in leadership and teaching between the five schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of writing by:
 - developing pupils' editing skills
 - deepening pupils' knowledge about what makes successful writing.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has justifiably earned the trust and respect of the school community by providing strong leadership that has empowered staff as well as pupils to develop their talents. Ably supported by the deputy headteacher, both senior leaders are ambitious in their drive for pupils to do as well as they can. In the words of a member of staff, 'I am proud to be a member of a caring dedicated staff team who are determined to do their best for all pupils.'
- Along with governors, the school is focused on raising standards in behaviour and achievement, demonstrating clear capacity for improvement.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has led to significant improvement in mathematics alongside some improvement in reading and teachers' marking.
- The school has developed its preferred approach to assessment and has good plans to implement it in full. Pupils and parents benefit from effective assessment information which indicates clearly how well pupils are doing and where they need to improve.
- The additional funding is used well to provide the best help for pupils needing support with their learning. Leaders base its use on a close assessment of each pupil's progress and needs. Its use is regularly reviewed to ensure that eligible pupils make at least similar progress to others throughout the school. While progress in reading, writing and mathematics is improving over time, by the end of Year 6, these pupils' attainment is currently approximately two terms behind others in their year group, both at school and nationally.
- The proportion of the most able pupils achieving at the highest levels, in reading, writing and mathematics, is higher than that seen nationally. Leaders have been effective in securing the highest levels in mathematics and English grammar. For example, approximately 12% of Year 6 pupils secured standards that were well above average in mathematics and English grammar last year.
- Underpinning the positive picture of good pupil achievement is the strength of the systems for checking pupils' progress. These are effectively aligned to the management of staff performance and shared with governors. Staff know that their pupils' results will influence their pay progression and that the Teachers' Standards underpin all expectations. Teachers, including newly qualified ones, value the training and support they get, because it helps them to develop their classroom practice.
- A successful 'mini-cluster partnership' with four other schools, encourages collaboration between senior leaders. This provides training and challenge in all aspects of leadership, teaching and learning. For example, the school's own judgements of teaching and pupils' work benefit from external validation, arranged through the partnership.
- Increasingly, middle leaders are effective in their areas of responsibility. They use information about pupils' progress and pupils' work, undertake lesson observations and model exemplary learning in order to have an impact on improving teaching quality. While leaders have been successful in improving aspects of the quality of teaching, since the previous inspection, some minor inconsistencies remain. For example, a minority of pupils are still not making rapid enough progress in their writing. Consequently, leadership and management are not outstanding as the quality of teaching over time, especially in relation to writing, is not yet outstanding.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for high quality learning and meets the needs and interests of pupils. There is a clear focus on teaching writing across the curriculum. It is very successfully broadened by a wide variety of enrichment activities, including French classes, music, residential trips and other exciting clubs and visits. There are good plans to implement the new National Curriculum in full.
- The school actively promotes physical education and sports. It ensures that pupils are given ample opportunities to be physically fit and to learn to play a range of sports.
- The development of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is highly successful and embedded in the curriculum and the everyday life of the school. Pupils celebrate the diversity of their backgrounds and thrive under the different artistic, scientific and cultural opportunities open to them. Consequently, they demonstrate a positive and confident approach to life which results from having high self-esteem.
- The school is extremely successful in engaging parents with how to help their children at home. Parents comment on how successfully the school promotes homework and praise the guidance they receive about helping their children at home.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and there are good arrangements in place for supporting pupils who are on the child protection register.
- The local authority has provided 'light touch' support for this good school, which has benefited from high

quality training, when requested.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body makes a strong contribution to the quality of education the school provides. Governors have a wide range of skills which they use effectively to support and strengthen the school's leadership. They make regular visits to the school which they know well. Governors have had relevant training on the Teachers' Standards. As a result, they have a clear awareness of the main strengths of teaching. They are proud that the school community appreciates and values pupils' many different backgrounds, ensuring pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain. They pay close attention to the school's information about pupils' progress and performance and compare it with local and national standards. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Governors contribute to the school's evaluation of its work and to its long-term plans. They monitor how the pupil premium is allocated and are pleased that the gaps in attainment are narrowing as a result. They are checking that the school's new assessment processes are robust and in line with the new National Curriculum. They hold the headteacher to account for the school's performance and the management of its finances which are sound and linked to the school's educational priorities. Governors make sure that the system for managing the performance of staff is transparent, robust and linked closely to pay for teachers and senior leaders. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and seeks out parents' views of important issues.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils typically behave well, both in lessons and around the school. They open doors for others, take turns and show respect for staff and visitors. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and are keen to try hard.
- Relationships across the school are strong because they are encouraged to resolve their differences responsibly, through the 'Whitehall Way'. As a result, the school is a harmonious community with pupils valuing each other's beliefs and ideas.
- Most of the parents who responded to Parent View or spoke to inspectors during the inspection were positive about behaviour in the school. Staff, too, feel behaviour in the school is usually good and managed well.
- Robust behaviour routines are well established and any infrequent incidents of inattention are managed effectively by teachers and support staff. As a result, attitudes to learning over time are good.
- A behaviour coach supports particular pupils with behavioural difficulties and she has also trained staff to manage their challenging behaviours. This has helped to radically reduce the number of behaviour incidents over time. Any incidents are carefully logged and discussed with pupils and their families.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as being members of the school council, mathematics ambassadors, reading champions, librarians and 'Eco-warriors' and take these roles very seriously. For example, Year 6 mathematics ambassadors help younger pupils to learn important numeracy skills such as their times tables.
- Attendance is above average and improving. The numbers of pupils with persistent absence is falling dramatically because of the school's persistence in ensuring their presence at school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel happy and safe at the school and are aware of people they can talk to if the need arises, including the playground buddies and supervisors. Pupils are aware of what constitutes bullying and name-calling. They say that bullying rarely happens but when it does the school deals with it swiftly.
- The school has invested in a good range of equipment and activities for the playgrounds to ensure that pupils are both active and fully occupied during lunch and play times. They are well supervised at these times.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers and their teaching assistants work together in effective teams. They develop good relationships with pupils that help to foster their good attitudes to learning. They routinely assess the effectiveness of their teaching to promote good standards of achievement and behaviour.

- Since the last inspection, the quality of feedback provided by teachers has improved and pupils are taking note of their teachers' advice more often. There are some examples of exemplary practice in marking, especially in mathematics, where pupils' progress has been most rapid.
- Consistently strong teaching has brought about accelerated achievement in mathematics over the past two years. Better use of pupil progress information means that teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are higher than previously. Teachers successfully plan learning activities that build on pupils' understanding from the previous lesson. As a result, pupils are appropriately challenged to make rapid gains.
- Pupils' reading is improving because staff ensure that most pupils read widely and often. Staff also make sure that parents who speak little English are shown how to help their children read at home.
- Adults who support pupils in need of additional help, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language, play a significant part in pupils' successful learning. This is because they are well briefed to support selected pupils.
- The most able pupils are now achieving better results in writing by the time they leave Year 6, because they are usually given tasks which are matched to their ability.
- However, a minority of middle ability pupils are not making as rapid progress because the quality of writing they produce is variable. Evidence from this inspection shows that they do not always know how to edit their work to make it better. Many of these children do not know what successful writing looks like.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils enter the school with attainment which is in line with that expected for their age. When they leave Year 6, a high proportion of pupils reach above average standards in mathematics and grammar.
- Although pupils' overall attainment in reading and writing has continued to be in line with that seen nationally, the attainment for the most able is now much higher. Improvements in these pupils' attainment result from strengthened teaching and well-targeted support for pupils who are at risk of falling behind.
- The school actively promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination well. It ensures that groups such as disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in English and mathematics from their different starting points. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well.
- Pupils supported through additional funding make similar progress in reading, writing and mathematics to their peers nationally. While the gap in attainment is narrowing, these pupils are still two terms behind other pupils nationally, and their classmates at school.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed because they are given many opportunities to discuss ideas with a talk partner or in groups. As a result, many pupils who speak English as an additional language are confident speakers of English.
- Pupils now make accelerated progress in mathematics because the subject is exceptionally well led and managed.
- Progress in reading and writing is good with notable success in the recent Year 6 grammar test. However, a minority of pupils still do not make sufficiently rapid gains with their writing.

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	102399
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	448236

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	386
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Mitchell
Headteacher	Joanna Nightingale
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 March 2010
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