

Westwood Farm Junior School

Fullbrook Crescent, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6RY

Inspection dates 10–11 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Not all subject leaders are doing enough to raise pupils' achievement.
- Sometimes teachers do not check carefully enough that pupils understand ideas and are learning well at key points in lessons.
- Planning does not always include opportunities for a significant proportion of pupils to make exceptionally good progress over a topic.
- There is very little outstanding teaching.
- There is little effective use of information and communication technology to support learning and teaching.
- Achievement is still affected by previously poor teaching, and some groups of pupils and classes are still catching up, especially in mathematics.
- Progress across year groups, and sometimes between classes in a year group, is uneven.
- Gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others are now closing, but not rapidly.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher has successfully driven up standards in all aspects of the school's work since her appointment after the previous inspection.
- She is very well supported by senior leaders, who each play a significant part in improving achievement.
- Mathematics and English are very well led in the school.
- There is very good leadership of the provision for groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to underachievement. As a result, many are beginning to achieve well.
- The Hearing Resource Base is well led. Pupils supported there make very good progress.
- Some teaching is very good, especially in the upper juniors.
- The school is a safe, pleasant and happy place for pupils. Pupils' behaviour on the playground and in lessons is good, and they enjoy learning.
- Governors know the school well and have useful and relevant expertise. They offer good levels of support and challenge to senior staff.
- Some useful links have been established with other schools to share best practice.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection began as the fifth monitoring inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, in connection with the school being judged as requiring special measures at its last inspection. During the visit inspectors deemed it a section 5 inspection. Evidence from the four previous visits was taken into account in the judgements.
- Inspectors observed eight lessons across all classes, including several jointly with senior staff, and undertook shorter visits to 13 other lessons.
- The school’s development planning and self-evaluation documents, policies and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.
- Inspectors met with senior staff, representatives of the governing body, other staff, groups of pupils and representatives of the local authority.
- The 12 responses to Parent View were taken into account, and some parents were spoken with informally at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Alan Taylor-Bennett, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Lesley Voaden

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- Westwood Farm Junior School federated with Westwood Farm Infant School in April 2014. One governing body now oversees the work of both schools, and several staff have responsibilities across both schools.
- The school is near the average size for primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is average.
- There is a local authority funded unit, located in the school, for up to 10 children with hearing impairment.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The school serves a community with below average ethnic and cultural diversity. Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard which sets out the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- Support is provided to the school by a Local Leader of Education, who is the headteacher of Birch Copse Primary School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all groups of pupils in every class make at least good progress, by:
 - developing teachers' skills at detecting and responding during lessons to the need to reinforce ideas already covered and to offer more challenge to some pupils
 - ensuring that planning builds in opportunities for a significant proportion of pupils to make very rapid progress over each topic, to increase the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress in mathematics, reading and writing by the end of the key stage
 - making sure that the special attention given to the needs of disadvantaged pupils, and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, enables achievement gaps between them and other pupils to be closed rapidly, especially in mathematics
 - making better use of computer-based resources in lessons.
- Strengthen leadership throughout the school, by:
 - using the good leadership already evident in English, mathematics and inclusion to develop the role of all subject leaders, so that they make a strong contribution to pupils' achievements
 - identifying what makes teaching and learning outstanding, and developing a core of outstanding of teaching in the school to help steer training
 - capitalising on the opportunities presented by the new federation to develop coordinated approaches to teaching and learning that help pupils make rapid progress throughout Years 3 to 6
 - continuing to work closely with other schools to share best practice and maintain reliability in assessments of pupils' achievements.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The executive headteacher, appointed shortly after the previous inspection, leads the school with great clarity of vision and a quiet but very real determination that every pupil will succeed, and be safe and happy in the school. She has brought about considerable improvements in all aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection.
- The deputy headteacher, the inclusion manager and the assistant headteacher have all made significant contributions to the school's improvement. They work very well as a team with the executive headteacher, and all staff and pupils benefit from this strong and purposeful leadership.
- Senior staff successfully lead work in mathematics and English and make very good provision for groups of pupils who require extra help and support. Other staff who have subject responsibilities have less well-developed leadership skills, and several have not yet made a big enough impact on pupils' achievements in their subject, or its organisation and assessment.
- The school's development planning is thorough and well focused on appropriate key priorities. It has supported the significant improvements made so far, and it is good enough to continue to do so. It is driven by accurate and honest evaluations of all aspects of the school's work.
- Systems to monitor pupils' achievement are effective. The achievement of groups of pupils such as the most able, those who are disabled or have special educational needs, or disadvantaged pupils, is checked particularly carefully and any necessary interventions are rapid and effective, and are themselves evaluated for their impact.
- Improvements to the quality of teaching are led well. Teaching is monitored closely and developments are supported by a well-judged blend of broad training, focused on issues which need to be better across the whole school, and also individual coaching and guidance. Newly qualified staff are well supported as an aspect of this. All teachers and teaching assistants are working successfully to improve their classroom practice. Not all are yet clear about what securely and reliably good and outstanding teaching and learning will look like in the school, however.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of learning opportunities in topic work and a well-coordinated programme of visits and projects coordinated with other local schools, such as the Shakespeare fortnight, a visit to the Globe, and a joint international arts week with the infant school.
- The curriculum is designed to make a good contribution to all pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. A rich assembly programme includes opportunities for reflection around aspects of current affairs and Bible stories. In addition, visiting speakers are welcomed who represent beliefs other than Christianity, such as Islam and Buddhism. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- There is strong and effective leadership of the Hearing Resource Base (HRB). This ensures that this provision is highly responsive to pupils' needs, and it is evaluated regularly. As a result, pupils supported in the HRB make very good progress.
- Senior staff have clear strategies to secure equality of opportunity for all pupils. For example, provision to close the achievement gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others is good. Every disadvantaged pupil has an individual achievement plan detailing how they will benefit from the pupil premium, and these plans are monitored by the senior member of staff with responsibilities for inclusion, and a nominated governor. As a result, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is improving, but steadily rather than rapidly, and currently faster in English than in mathematics.
- The sports premium is used effectively. All pupils benefit from a local secondary school physical education teacher providing weekly lessons. The school's teachers work alongside this visiting teacher and this is a useful source of training for them. Pupils are given opportunities to compete at inter-school level. Levels of participation in extra-curricular sports and dance have increased; four out of five pupils now enjoy such opportunities and, in a recent questionnaire, all said that they feel positive about physical education and sport.
- All aspects of safeguarding are secure. The school's leadership has good quality systems in place around all aspects of safeguarding, and these are reviewed regularly.
- Parents remained loyal to the school during the time when it was subject to special measures because they respect the quality of the leadership of the executive headteacher. All parents spoken with during the inspection were positive about the school, and felt it to have improved significantly and to be still improving. Their views agree with the largely positive, but small number of, responses to Parent View.
- The potential benefits of the federation with the infant school are beginning to be realised. For example, the transition from Year 2 to Year 3 was particularly smooth this year; as a result pupils in Year 3 were able to start making good progress soon after joining the school. Some staff work across both schools and

are beginning to bring some policies and procedures into alignment. Not all of the potential advantages have had a chance to be identified and brought about yet.

- The local authority provides very good support for the school. It brokered valuable support from a Local Leader of Education to strengthen leadership development, and local authority consultants work with subject advisers and teachers to develop teaching and learning in mathematics and English. A school improvement adviser from the local authority plays an important role in the regular meetings to review pupils' achievements. The executive headteacher orchestrates this support very well, to make sure that it matches the priorities identified in the school development plan.
- **The governance of the school** provides good support and challenge for the headteacher and senior staff. Governors have adapted to their new roles well because some continuity from the previous Interim Executive Board was maintained. Governors have been keen to fill in gaps in their knowledge and develop their experiences of the work of different age groups. Individual governors' skills are well matched to the specific responsibilities they carry out and there has been some good training undertaken this term, including in the use of information around pupils' achievements. Appropriately close attention is paid to the performance of disadvantaged pupils, and governors make sure that details are published on the school website about how the pupil premium is spent, and its impact. Governors keep themselves very well informed about the work of the school by, for example, visiting lessons and assemblies regularly and speaking with staff. They have recently conducted a review of parents' views of the school's effectiveness. All of this information is used to check senior staff's judgements of the quality of its work. Governors have made sure that all key policies are in place, and they play an active role in their implementation. For example, they scrutinise performance management arrangements, and recommendations around pay awards, and ensure that only the best teaching is rewarded.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are friendly and welcoming to visitors, and show each other respect. They show pride in themselves, their work, and their school.
- Pupils respond to teaching very positively. In several classes observed, there was a genuine air of excitement and interest in the tasks set, and a keenness to do well. Pupils helped each other and some offered challenge to their working partners. Only some can usefully question their own grasp of the ideas, and that of their friends. Occasionally attention flags, but there is rarely any disruption to learning due to poor behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy playtimes. They value the contributions made by the Year 6 'Smile Team' to the good oversight of adult supervisors, to making sure that everyone plays happily together and no one is left out. Pupils themselves take responsibility for organising play equipment and for monitoring movement in and out of the building, and they carry out these roles reliably. There are occasional problems at playtime but they are quickly sorted out.
- Exclusions are very rare. There have been none so far this academic year, and there were only two last year. This is because the school has a good system of rewards and sanctions which is used consistently and effectively by all staff. A small number of pupils sometimes present high levels of need and this can manifest itself as poor behaviour; this is managed well and any impact on the learning of others is minimised. All instances of misbehaviour are recorded, and responses are detailed. The school makes good use of these records to monitor the welfare of individuals, and to spot any patterns emerging.
- The school is a tidy, well-cared-for and pleasant environment. There is no litter, and several corridor displays are attractive, and valued by pupils.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- There is very little bullying in the school. Any problems tend to be around friendships groups changing, and teachers and teaching assistants keep a close eye on this. If concerns arise, staff respond quickly and involve parents in the solution. There are few instances of racist or homophobic language and teachers' responses are effective.
- All appropriate checks are made on adults who work with pupils. Senior staff and governors ensure that safeguarding training for all staff is up to date, and a healthy culture of caring and watching out for signs of concern is maintained.
- Pupils learn about e-safety in the curriculum and are aware of the dangers around inappropriate use of

social media and the internet generally. Risk assessments for all trips and visits are undertaken, and the outcomes are acted upon.

- Attendance has improved significantly over the last three years. It was above the national average last year and it is currently very high in all year groups. Pupils are punctual to school. Both of these strengths are a result of an appropriately assertive response to unauthorised absence, and lateness, by senior staff, and good liaison with the education welfare officer to support some families.
- Parents who responded to Parent View, and those spoken with during the inspection, said that they feel the school to be a safe, secure and well-managed environment for their child.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Some is now very good. The variation between the best teaching and the rest is currently too great to enable pupils to make consistently good progress as they move up through the school.
- The best teaching constantly reviews how well pupils are learning, and precisely how well an idea has been understood or a concept grasped. When this is done well, it is achieved through close questioning, and by encouraging pupils to check their own work and that of their friends. This is an example of many teachers' high expectations of pupils' achievements. Some teaching involves the use of these techniques but with insufficient skill; in such cases the teaching does not adapt to the constantly changing needs of the pupils rapidly enough, or with enough precision.
- Planning is good enough to enable teachers to be clear about the specific learning that they wish to promote, and to provide appropriate work for different groups of pupils. Sometimes, however, the lack of insight into the extent of progress made in a lesson prevents a consistently high match of challenge to individual need. Too little planning builds-in opportunities for an appreciable proportion of pupils to make rapid progress in a topic.
- The quality of marking and feedback is an emerging strength. Some is highly effective, and pupils themselves value the detailed guidance it gives about exactly how to make their work better. All staff appreciate the contribution to learning that very good marking can make. There is consistency across the school in the way that it is done, but not yet in its quality.
- Writing is now being taught at least adequately, and in some classrooms very well. This is because everyone follows the same approach which gives teachers and pupils alike a very clear understanding of how separate writing skills can be brought together, how quickly progress is being made, and the essential point of each of the writing tasks undertaken.
- Reading skills are benefiting from the close associations being made between it and writing. Teachers are successfully encouraging reading for pleasure through, for example, involvement in a special intervention programme for boys. The use of phonics is not well enough developed to strongly support this in the lower juniors yet, nor with some older pupils who still struggle with their reading.
- Teaching in mathematics is livelier and more fun now. Pupils are being given more interesting problem-solving activities and they take pleasure in using, and developing, a broader range of skills in this context. In one lesson observed, pupils were puzzling through some challenges around translations, reflections and rotations of some common shapes. Everyone achieved very well and enjoyed doing so, and the most able produced some impressive insights into how rules established can be formalised into algebraic expressions. Everyone, including the teacher, was exhilarated by the quality of the thinking involved.
- Teachers now assess pupils' work accurately and reliably. This provides a very good basis on which to review the progress of individuals and groups of pupils, and plan for improvements. This is still driven largely by the headteacher and other senior staff, however, and not yet by every teacher.
- Sometimes, pupils benefit from specific activities but do not have the chance to reflect on their significance. For example, the nature of democracy is not explored explicitly when pupils vote for their school council representatives. Opportunities are missed to teach children that families can have a range of different, and equally valuable, forms.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement has risen markedly since the last inspection. Achievement is now at least adequate in all classes; in some it is good.
- This is in marked contrast to the overall low achievement of last year's Year 6. Over their first few years in the school, these pupils suffered from the weaker teaching prevalent at the time of the last inspection.

Because of this, their progress over that time was very slow. Much better teaching near the end of Key Stage 2 significantly raised their achievement but could not fully make amends for the impact of the previously much poorer provision. Outcomes in 2014 were, as a result, very low in comparison to national averages.

- The quality of learning is now much better across the school; current Year 6 pupils are expected to achieve end of Key Stage 2 outcomes in keeping with their previously good attainment at Key Stage 1. However, the concentration on ensuring that every pupil makes the progress expected of them means that the proportion making very good progress has been variable across classes and year groups.
- Pupils' progress in writing had been a particular concern at the time of the last inspection, but improvements have been substantial since then, particularly this term and especially in Year 3 and Year 6. Because of previously poor teaching, the quality of pupils' writing is still very variable across the school but senior leaders are well aware of this and are addressing the slower progress being made particularly in the lower juniors.
- Achievement in mathematics has also improved since the last inspection, especially in Year 6. Overall gains are not as great as in reading and writing, however, and the impact of previously poor learning is still evident in some classes. The new problem-solving approaches to teaching mathematics, and the successful balance of making sure that pupils catch-up as well as learn new skills, is beginning to even out the considerable differences across classes.
- An accent on 'next steps' and encouraging pupils to respond in detail to marking in many classes contributes strongly to pupils' progress. As a result, some pupils show a sophisticated understanding of how their work may be improved. This is most obvious in writing where the school-wide approach adopted recently has already proved very successful.
- More able pupils have begun to make very much better progress this year. They are now making consistently good progress in reading and in mathematics, and good progress in writing in Years 3, 5 and 6. Extra provision, including 'philosophy for kids', is giving them more opportunities to enjoy some challenging work.
- In 2014 the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others in reading, writing and mathematics was equivalent to about one year's progress; in comparison with other pupils nationally it was nearly two years. Because of the good levels of support they receive, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school currently making the progress expected is much better, but gaps in attainment are not yet closing rapidly, especially in mathematics.
- Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs are now beginning to make much better progress because of the very well organised provision for their needs. Their achievement is now securely adequate, and is improving.

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	109845
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	446185

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	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanna Jackson
Executive Headteacher	Susan Deacon
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2013
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