

Hertford Junior School

Lynchet Close, Brighton, BN1 7FP

Inspection dates 8–9 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Senior leaders, including governors, have successfully improved the school since the previous inspection.
- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards by the end of Year 6 have improved over time and are above average.
- All groups, including the most able pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils, make good progress.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and engage them well in their lessons.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is good and they are polite and friendly.
- The school looks after its pupils well. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and learn how to look after themselves in and out of school.
- Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school's work.
- Governors know the school well and are committed to its further improvement. They are fully supportive of senior leaders in their efforts to continually improve the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet typically outstanding and the best practice is not shared widely enough.
- Pupils' work in their English and mathematics books is often untidy and poorly presented.
- Agreed, effective, whole-school approaches to teaching and learning are not consistently implemented. On occasions, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough.
- Measures taken by the school to improve are not always linked to measurable targets or tight enough deadlines.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, several of which were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors talked to pupils about their work, looked at books and listened to some pupils read. They observed pupils at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and staff with key leadership responsibilities. Discussions were held with pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents including: the school’s own checks on its performance and the quality of teaching; the school improvement plan; information on pupils’ progress; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors looked at the 66 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and one letter from a parent and spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also looked at 16 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Neil Small

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized junior school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- At just under a fifth of the school population, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- Nearly half of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for those in the care of the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all improvements are linked to measurable targets, with tight deadlines and clear markers of progress, in order to further accelerate the momentum of improvement.
- Improve teaching so that it is typically outstanding by making certain that:
 - all teachers consistently follow the school's agreed approaches to teaching and learning
 - teachers have suitably high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - the presentation of pupils' work is neat and tidy
 - the best practice in the school is shared more widely.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the governing body have taken effective action to improve teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- There is strong teamwork across the staff which extends to the wider school community. Confirming this, one member of staff said: 'The school really values each and every member of the community. There is a real team here and everyone does their absolute best to support the children.'
- Arrangements for managing teachers' performance are established and effective. Where weaknesses in teaching are identified, support is provided and improvement is expected. Good professional development links to whole-school improvement as well as meeting the individual needs of teachers.
- Middle leaders, including subject leaders, know the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and areas of responsibility. They provide good support and guidance for colleagues, which are contributing to better progress. Regular scrutiny of pupils' books and teachers' planning and observations of how well pupils are learning are used effectively to monitor pupils' progress.
- Senior leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses and have a clear picture of what must be done to sustain improvement. However, the targets set in school and subject improvement plans and in teachers' individual action plans are not always specific enough. As a result, it is sometimes difficult for leaders to evaluate the impact of improvement measures. Also, the deadlines for the achievement of targets are sometimes not tight enough.
- All staff and governors are committed to equality of opportunity and ensuring that pupils learn without any type of discrimination. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum and in assemblies. Staff provide good role models when promoting the school's values. Good relationships are fostered between all pupils and between pupils and staff.
- Pupils understand the school rules and why everyone has to live by a set of principles. They learn about fairness, equality and respect for differences in faiths, cultures and backgrounds and about taking care of resources in school and in the natural world. This prepares them well for their next schools and for life in modern Britain.
- The school teaches a broad and balanced range of subjects linked to topics that motivate and interest the pupils. Trips and extra activities, including clubs, add to the experiences provided. Appropriate priority is given to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to provide a range of support and narrow gaps in achievement between this group and others.
- Additional primary sports funding is used well to increase the opportunities for competitive sports and provide training for staff. The impact of this expenditure is monitored carefully to ensure the maximum possible benefit to pupils' well-being and health.
- Parents are very positive about all that the school offers children, their families and the community. Almost all parents who returned the questionnaire are very happy with the school and very supportive of its work and leadership.
- The safeguarding arrangements are well established and effectively implemented by all staff to keep pupils safe.
- The local authority has supported the school well to ensure improvements over time.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and are committed to its improvement.
 - Governors clearly understand the school's performance and how it compares to other schools nationally. They have conducted an audit of governors' skills to ascertain how they can further support the school and provide greater strategic direction and challenge.
 - Governors know about the quality of teaching and ensure that pay rewards and promotions are linked to pupils' progress. They have a very good awareness of the use and impact of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and the primary sports funding.
 - The governing body ensures that all governors' statutory responsibilities are met, including safeguarding requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have good attitudes to learning which help them make good progress in lessons. Pupils behave equally well in and out of lessons, including at breaks and lunchtimes and when working with adults. School records show that good behaviour is typical over time.
- Almost all parents who returned questionnaires agree that pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils enjoy school. This is reflected in their attendance, which has improved and is now above average. Punctuality has improved, in part as a result of early morning sports activities that encourage pupils to get to school on time.
- Pupils are respectful, friendly and polite to each other, teachers and other adults and visitors to school. The school's commitment to the promotion of good pupil behaviour and class relationships is reflected in its involvement in the personalised support and training programme, Working With Others.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that their children feel safe and are well looked after at school.
- The pupils themselves said that they feel safe in school and that they know how to keep themselves safe out of school. They understand e-safety.
- Pupils said that there is very little bullying in school but that they know about different types of bullying. Pupils are confident that if any issues should arise, teachers would listen to them and act quickly to resolve them. Relationships between staff and pupils are caring, supportive and trusting which means that pupils feel that they are listened to and that their views are taken seriously.
- The breakfast club provides a healthy and safe start to the day for those who attend.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers plan their teaching carefully and lessons motivate and engage pupils' interests so that they learn well.
- Good, trusting relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils enjoy learning, work hard and want to do well.
- Skilful questioning by teachers helps them to check pupils' understanding, challenge pupils to think more deeply and speed up the pace of learning.
- The teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics is good. Teachers provide meaningful and relevant activities so that pupils understand the purpose of their learning and have opportunities to apply their skills. This is more evident in English than it is in mathematics.
- Pupils and parents appreciate the homework arrangements. Using the school's points system, homework encourages pupils to continue to take responsibility for and make decisions about their learning when they are at home.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the learning of pupils of all abilities and especially disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They provide good support in the classroom and when working with small groups or individuals.
- Teachers' marking and other feedback give pupils good pointers on how to improve their work and they are given time to respond. Pupils also learn how to reflect on and evaluate their own work and that of their classmates.
- On occasion, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. The school's agreed and effective approaches to teaching and learning are not consistently implemented in every class and pupils can fail to make the rapid progress of which they are capable. There are not enough occasions for teachers to share and learn from the most effective teaching.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement has improved.
- From the school's own assessments of pupils' starting points in Year 3, pupils make good progress. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, they have achieved standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above average. Many pupils make progress which exceeds that made by pupils nationally as a result of the improving quality of teaching and the particularly rapid progress they make in Year 6.

- Since the previous inspection, the school has focused particularly on raising achievement in writing. The successful impact of this work was reflected in a marked improvement in pupils' writing to levels which were well above average in 2014.
- Pupils' success in writing has been, to a large extent, due to the many opportunities to develop their vocabulary through speaking and listening and drama activities. They also have many opportunities to write at length in other subjects as well as English. This has effectively increased pupils' enjoyment of writing. A group agreed with one pupil who said that, 'We enjoy writing because we write about things that interest us.'
- Standards in grammar, punctuation and spelling, however, are broadly average.
- Improvements in mental mathematics and more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to real-life problems have helped to raise their achievement in mathematics.
- The most able pupils are challenged well by well-planned activities to extend and deepen their knowledge. As a result, the number of pupils achieving the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 improved in all subjects to above average, and significantly so in writing.
- Pupils of all abilities enjoy reading and by Year 6 most read with fluency, expression and understanding. Reading for enjoyment is promoted well across the school.
- There is an agreed policy for the quality of pupils' presentation. However, many pupils' work is untidy and poorly presented. The school knows that this is an area in which teachers must have higher expectations.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar, good progress to others because their needs are well met.
- From their varied starting points, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is good when compared to other pupils nationally. By the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014, almost all disadvantaged pupils made the expected progress or better progress.
- In the 2014 national tests, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils by the end of Year 6 was similar to other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics; previous gaps have closed. Compared to their classmates, the gaps have narrowed: in 2014, the attainment of this group was around four months behind others in the school in mathematics and reading and around six months behind in 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	114383
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	453748

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carl Chambers
Headteacher	Joan Marshall
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 January 2013
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