

# Branksome Heath Junior School

Livingstone Road, Parkstone, Poole, BH12 3DX

**Inspection dates** 29-30 January 2015

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

- Pupils' standards at the end of Year 6, in reading, writing and mathematics have been below national averages for the past three years.
- Pupils' attainment in writing is especially low.
- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good in all year groups.
- Pupils in some year groups do not have enough opportunities to develop their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Some pupils are not always given enough support with their writing when faced with new or unfamiliar words.
- The behaviour of a small number of pupils is poor and this stops them from making good progress.
- Not all pupils attend school as often as they should. As a result some pupils miss valuable time in school and their learning suffers.

### The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher has shown a strong determination to improve the attainment of pupils and the progress they make. As a result, there now is a clear strategic development plan that is already beginning to have an impact on many areas of the school's work.
- The head of school and the interim deputy headteacher support the executive headteacher very effectively.
- Pupils are now making rapid progress due to the improved quality of teaching, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and that they are well looked after by the adults they work with.
- The governing body has successfully provided the necessary challenge to the leadership team and effected major change. Its work has significantly improved the school.
- Through engaging and thoughtful activities the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the pupils is well developed. The school's new ethos and care are now fostering good relationships.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 20 lessons or small group activities. The inspectors also watched two assemblies.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and senior leaders. The lead inspector met with the Chair and other members of the newly federated Governing Body. He held meetings with a representative of the local authority and the school improvement partner.
- An inspector listened to pupils from Years 3 and 6 read. Other team members scrutinised samples of pupils' workbooks.
- The inspectors examined a wide range of documents, including the school's information on pupils' recent progress. They also looked at planning and documentation about checks on teaching, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- The opinions of parents were taken into account through the 35 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). An inspector spoke to a number of parents, who were dropping their children off at school, to seek their views of the school.

## Inspection team

David Hogg, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stephanie Matthews	Additional Inspector
Alison Hendy	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- On 1 January 2015, Branksome Heath Junior School formed a formal federation with Sylvan Infants School. The headteacher of the infant school, who had been acting as interim headteacher of the junior school, took over as executive headteacher across the federation.
- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. All pupils attend full time.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion of them speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- Nearly two fifths of the pupils in the school receive support funded by the pupil premium. This is higher than that found in most schools. The pupil premium is funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has undergone a significant period of staff turnover in the last six months with all of the school leadership team and just over half of the the staff leaving.

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

- Improve the overall quality of teaching to good by ensuring teachers:
  - help pupils to develop their writing and spelling skills by extending their key vocabulary
  - provide more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical understanding in different subject areas to accelerate their progress.
- Raise achievement of all groups of pupils by the end of Year 6 through ensuring that their skills in reading, mathematics and especially writing are developed and applied more quickly.
- Raise the attendance of pupils to at least average levels so that they can maximise their opportunities to achieve.
- Improve the weak behaviour of a minority of pupils by:
  - continuing to use the new strategies developed by senior leaders to promote good behaviour
  - ensuring that all teachers consistently praise good behaviour.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher quickly identified issues of underachievement across the school in most subject areas when she took on the role on an interim basis. She has challenged the poor and ineffective teaching of the past and made the necessary changes. She has provided the school with a clear direction for the future. All members of staff have embraced her vision and have a shared goal to improve the school.
- The senior leaders have drawn from their previous experience to improve systems and procedures in school. First, robust systems have developed to help teachers check on the progress pupils make. Second, the school has implemented a more considered approach to managing the pupils' behaviour. This has already reduced the number of incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
- Middle leaders have been able to draw on the expertise of all of the senior leadership team as they build their own skills and understanding of their roles. They are now taking an active role in checking the progress pupils make and the effectiveness of the teaching in their subject areas. This is providing effective support to the senior team in its efforts to improve the school.
- The local authority has provided the school with a high level of support which is now helping develop the skills of the teachers in the school. The local authority has been very effective in supporting the governing body in its efforts to secure fundamental changes in the school's leadership team.
- The school uses the additional pupil premium funding well. Through well-targeted support, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs now are beginning to achieve well. The progress of both groups is improving. The school works hard to ensure all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- There is a close link between the pupils' achievement and the opportunities for promotion and pay progression for teachers, with only good performance being rewarded. Staff develop their skills through well-planned training and close working with more experienced colleagues.
- The activities in the school's curriculum engage pupils and develop their skills, not only in their academic work but also in their personal and social development. Boys' interest, in some activities, is nurtured by tailoring content of the lessons. For example, in a Year 5 dance class, pupils choreographed their own movements set to the theme from 'Mission Impossible'. This caught the imagination of the boys in the group. It also allowed the class to reflect on and discuss the content of the dance pieces.
- Pupils are encouraged to think about the way they conduct themselves and the impact that may have on others. Assemblies help them understand moral issues and British values, such as tolerance and respect. In a meeting with pupils from Years 3 and 4, one pupil described democracy as 'having individual liberty and having opinions'. The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is good and they are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- The school has a tradition of success in sport and uses the additional primary sports funding to good effect. The skills of the staff have improved through training activities and they are more confident to deliver high quality physical education lessons. The school has seen a greater involvement in clubs and activities, especially from those pupils who are more vulnerable.
- Parents are kept up to date about the subjects their children are learning through the school website. Parents who met with members of the inspection team said they were happy with the school and could see an improvement in the school already.
- The systems and procedures for ensuring pupils are well cared for and that they are safe in school meet the required standards. The school is robust in its monitoring of safeguarding and child protection.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body was instrumental in securing the necessary improvements to the leadership of the school. Their efforts were key in precipitating the changes that are now beginning to raise standards across the school. With the school joining the infant school in a federation, the composition of the governing body has changed. That said, the 'federated team' works closely with the school and has a good understanding of how the school is tackling underachievement and weaker teaching. The governors review the effectiveness of teaching through reports from the headteacher and external consultants. They use this information along with school reviews of pupils' progress to consider salary or promotion opportunities for staff. They are also now more confident in comparing the school's performance against national averages. The governing body monitors the financial position of the school carefully to ensure resources, including the additional primary sports funding, are effectively used.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils** require improvement**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. When lessons are engaging, pupils have a positive attitude to learning. However, some pupils can lose focus when tasks are less exciting and their progress slows.
- In the past, the numbers of learning days lost due to pupil exclusions were high. The school is developing strategies to support pupils who display behaviours that are extremely challenging. The deputy headteacher works closely with these pupils in an effort to improve their readiness to learn in class. This term has seen a significant drop in exclusions compared with previous terms.
- Pupils' behaviour around school is still inconsistent. Most pupils move around school sensibly but others can be boisterous especially if they think an adult is not observing them.
- Teachers monitor the behaviour of the pupils closely in class. However, they do not always highlight examples of good behaviour and praise pupils when they are working well. More often teachers will give reminders or warnings about the pupils' behaviour. This can lead to minor incidents of off-task behaviour escalating into issues that are more serious.
- Pupils say that there is little in the way of bullying or unkindness. If problems do occur, they are confident to talk to the adults in school who will help resolve any issues.
- Pupils are confident to talk about their school. They are polite and well mannered when meeting new people. They take on responsibility through the school council. Older pupils become sports leaders and, for example, work with younger ones at breaks and lunchtimes.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils enjoy school and say they are well cared for in school. They have a good understanding of personal safety and older pupils are clear why they need to be careful when using the internet or playing games on line.
- Appropriate checks are made when new staff are recruited. All adults receive child protection training to ensure they are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average and this is limiting the progress made by some who do not attend regularly. The school is working hard to break the legacy of the past and reduce absence but leaders are aware that this remains a priority for improvement.

**The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching, in the past, has not been effective enough to ensure pupils made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Recent improvements indicate pupils are now beginning to make better progress across the school.
- The school recognises the need to improve the quality and consistency of teaching further in writing, especially in Years 3 and 4. Activities in lessons do not always support the development of the pupils' grammar and punctuation skills. Consequently, some pupils repeat errors. On occasions, some pupils are not given the key vocabulary they need to include in their work and they make spelling mistakes.
- Year 6 pupils are able to use their mathematical understanding in other subject areas, for example in science. However, pupils in other year groups do not have similar opportunities to practise and apply their numeracy skills in a wide range of subjects and this hinders their progress in mathematics.
- Pupils' work is well marked. The feedback they receive is clear and lets them know how to improve their work. Pupils make the necessary corrections promptly at the start of each day in 'Growing Green Time' and this helps them build on what they have worked on in previous lessons.
- In the past, there was a lack of accountability by teachers for the progress pupils made. Teachers did not use the information they held on pupils' progress very effectively. By raising expectations, teachers now use this progress information with greater purpose. Well-planned activities challenge the most able and support the pupils who may need additional help. Teaching assistants are now deployed better in class and their skills are more successfully used.

**The achievement of pupils****requires improvement**

- For a number of years pupils' attainment has been well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, the proportion making and exceeding expected progress has been below national figures.
- The changes to the quality of teaching which began in September 2014 are having a marked impact on the rate of progress made by pupils. The information the school holds indicates that most groups of pupils across the school are now making accelerated progress.
- Younger pupils join the school with a good understanding of phonics (the sounds that are linked to letters) and can use this knowledge to break up and blend the sounds when reading unfamiliar words. Older pupils read with increasing fluency and confidence. Pupils enjoy reading and have opportunities to read regularly at school. However, not all pupils say they read as often at home.
- Pupils are now making better progress in developing their writing skills as they move through the school. The work seen in the books of Year 6 pupils showed they can write with imagination and flair. For example, some of their poetry was creative, thoughtful and reflective. Pupils across the different year groups demonstrate good skills when writing for a range of different purposes. The school supports the development of the pupils' skills in other subject areas with extended writing, for example in history. The work seen in pupils' books, from this year so far, is of higher quality when compared to that from last year.
- Pupils take care with the presentation of their work, especially those pupils who have permission to write with a pen.
- Activities in mathematics have been restructured to ensure the progress pupils make is greater than in the past. Recent assessments indicate that teaching is now more challenging for all pupils and the progress they now make is more rapid in all year groups.
- The school recognises the need to provide a higher level of challenge to the most able pupils. Until recently, these pupils have not achieved as well as they should. Through focused activities, small groups of Years 5 and 6 pupils are able to access the higher levels of work in mathematics. Although still early in its implementation, the high quality teaching they receive is accelerating their progress and standards are rising for the most able pupils.
- The school has an increasing proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their first language. Through good support in targeted small group work, the school is able to build on the pupils' positive attitudes to learning and develop their language skills well. Consequently, these pupils are now making good progress, especially in mathematics. Pupils from all different ethnic groups make similar progress across the school.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly in line with that of other pupils. Class teachers and teaching assistants are now working closely together to ensure activities are supportive but challenging and help develop pupils' skills and understanding.
- The school's work with disadvantaged pupils is increasingly effective. The progress they now make is better than that of other pupils in most subject areas in nearly all year groups. However, some gaps in their attainment remain when compared with other pupils. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 6 were one term behind other pupils in writing and two terms behind in mathematics but the gap had closed in reading. When compared with other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were three terms behind in writing, four terms behind in mathematics and about a term behind in reading.

## 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>	113703
<b>Local authority</b>	Poole
<b>Inspection number</b>	453539

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	392
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Quenten Walker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Executive Headteacher Sarah Lee Head of School Andrew Brown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30–31 January 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01202 747966
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