

Kingsway Junior School

Briar Road, Watford, WD25 0JH

Inspection dates 7–8 May 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.

- Highly effective leadership from the school's leaders and governors has led to improvements since the previous inspection in pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour.
- Teaching is good and much improved since the previous inspection. Pupils receive frequent feedback on how well they are doing and how to improve their work. Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well.
- The assessment of pupils' attainment is both accurate and thorough. All groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve well and make at least good progress, particularly in writing.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2014, pupils reached average standards in writing but their attainment was below average in reading and mathematics. From where they started in Year 3, this represented good progress for these pupils.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in a wide variety of situations. Most enjoy learning and are keen to come to school.
- The provision for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is good. It is helping them to make good progress.
- The curriculum successfully develops pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives as citizens of modern Britain.
- Subject and other leaders play a major role in driving improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school's work. They work effectively in partnership with senior leaders to improve the school.
- Clear priorities have been identified to raise standards and speed up progress even further, and the school is well placed to continue improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, so that standards are not yet as high as they should be.
- Pupils make too many errors in their spellings.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to improve their skills in investigating and solving problems in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class. Two observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils to ascertain their views of school and their learning. Inspectors also scrutinised the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read. They observed the teaching of reading skills and talked with pupils about the books they have enjoyed and those that they are currently reading.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, staff and a representative of the local authority, as well as with members of the governing body.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents including: safeguarding records; the school's improvement plan; the school's data for tracking pupils' progress; reports on pupils' achievement; records of pupils' behaviour; and the school's checks of the quality of teaching.
- The inspectors talked with pupils as they played at break times, and visited the dining hall at lunchtime. They observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around school.
- Inspectors took account of the 37 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, as well as the school's own parental survey and the views of the parents with whom they spoke. They also took account of the 21 responses to the staff questionnaire completed during the inspection.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Wayland

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kingsway Junior is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each year group.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average. The majority of pupils come from families of White British heritage. The other pupils come from a range of different ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is just above average. An increasing number are at an early stage of learning English.
- In the past two years, an above average proportion of pupils joined and left the school at other than the usual times. Last year, over a third of pupils in Year 6 joined the school, all had special educational needs and were known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is broadly average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is higher than that found nationally. A high proportion of these had behavioural, social or emotional difficulties.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher joined the school in January 2013. Almost all the teaching staff have been appointed since the previous inspection, including the deputy headteacher and middle leaders.
- Since the previous inspection, a new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body have been appointed. Several members of the governing body are relatively new.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning, and the rates and consistency of pupils' progress, by:
 - increasing teachers' skills in the teaching of mathematics by sharing the good practice that already exists in the school
 - making sure that the work set in mathematics is challenging enough to enable pupils to learn more rapidly
 - ensuring that teachers give pupils more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to investigate and solve problems, in mathematics lessons and other subjects
 - making sure marking helps pupils to become more confident and skilled at spelling.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- There has been a strong and resolute drive to improve since the previous inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher show determination in working with the support of the local authority to achieve major improvements in the school. A cohesive staff team and effective senior leaders are all working together to ensure a consistent approach to pupils' learning. Teaching, behaviour and pupils' achievement have all improved significantly. This indicates a strong capacity for further improvement.
- The school's evaluation of its own strengths and areas for development is well thought out and accurate. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and well-targeted extra help is immediately given to any pupil in danger of falling behind in their work. This ensures equality of opportunity.
- Teaching is rigorously monitored and staff performance is managed effectively. Only teachers whose pupils make good or better progress receive pay increases. This has brought a high level of consistency to the rapidly improved quality of teaching across the school.
- Recent appointments have added leadership expertise to the school and these subject and other leaders have made a major contribution to its improvement. They have clear priorities for raising achievement further in English and mathematics. They rigorously scrutinise pupils' work and monitor their progress carefully. They also give less-experienced staff good support and help them to improve their teaching skills. The school recognises that some teachers need more help to develop their skills further in the teaching of mathematics so that pupils of all abilities receive the right amount of challenge.
- British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well. For example, school council representatives have to be elected into their positions. This process was supported by both the local Member of Parliament and the town mayor, which helped to develop their understanding about the democratic process. The balanced curriculum has an appropriate focus on promoting pupils' good literacy and numeracy skills. It also enriches their pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a wealth of exciting trips and visits. Pupils learn and have a good understanding about different cultures and religions. As a result, they are very tolerant of others in the school and there is no form of discrimination.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support eligible pupils through well-planned targeted support. This has helped to improve the progress of these pupils and close the attainment gaps between them and others in the school.
- Primary physical education and sport funding has been well spent on specialist coaching for pupils and training for staff. As a result, participation rates are high, including in a variety of before and after-school clubs. This has helped pupils to become more confident participants in competitive sport.
- All safeguarding requirements are met. Staff are well trained and fully aware of the school's policies and procedures. Children and adults feel safe as a result.
- The local authority has an accurate understanding of the school's performance, because the checks that it makes are robust. It has supported the school in improving the accuracy of teachers' assessments. Effective support and training, including for governors, have added to the drive for rapid and sustainable school improvement.
- The stronger links developed with parents and families since the last inspection are having an increasingly positive influence in helping families to support their children's achievement. An overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to others. Parents are very pleased with the improvements in the school and how well their children are learning.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body provides good support and strategic direction to the school. With the headteacher, governors have taken decisive actions that put the school in a stronger position than it was at the time of the previous inspection.
- Although many governors are relatively new, they bring a good range of skills and experience, which they regularly update by attending further training. They use their knowledge and skills to hold school leaders to account for standards at the school. Their effectiveness has been reviewed and, as a result, they are more confident and competent in carrying out their roles and responsibilities.
- The governing body has a good knowledge of the quality of teaching and learning because it receives regular reports from the headteacher and reports on reviews undertaken by local authority staff. Additionally, governors carry out focused learning walks to familiarise themselves with classroom practice. Consequently, they understand the school's priorities for continued improvement.
- Governors ensure that performance management is used effectively. A clear policy links staff targets to financial reward and governors ensure that decisions about teachers' pay increases are linked to pupils' achievement and the teachers' performance. The governing body also checks that pupil premium funding has had the intended impact on raising standards and on closing any attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others.
- Governors make sure that statutory requirements are met. They check the safety of the school site and make sure that all current safeguarding policies and procedures keep pupils and staff safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils usually behave well in lessons and around the school. They know the school rules and the sanctions for poor behaviour. The school has clear policies and procedures to promote good behaviour.
- There are good relationships between staff and pupils. Newcomers are welcomed by other pupils and helped to integrate swiftly into their classes.
- In most lessons, pupils have good attitudes to their work, are keen to learn and complete their work well. This, coupled with the school's strong emphasis on fostering good relationships, has a positive effect on their achievement.
- Pupils feel valued as members of the school community and their views are communicated well to senior leaders through the democratically elected school council. This has enabled pupils to take an active role, influencing school life. For example, the changes to the climbing equipment and the wider range of activities now available to them during break times were the result of school council discussion.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because, occasionally, a few pupils need reminders from staff to concentrate fully and to get on with their work.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Security systems are well established and robust. All staff are thoroughly familiar with drills and protocols.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and take their own responsibility for staying safe very seriously. They rightly trust teachers and support staff to help them if they have any concerns. Pupils learn about how to stay safe through, for example, knowing about online, water and road safety.
- Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take. They report that incidents are rare because the school has raised awareness of the effect of bullying on the victim. For example, the school's internet safety policy includes the effects that bullying can have on others and what pupils can do to avoid it. Pupils are helped also by the good quality of advice and guidance given by staff.
- The school's record keeping of any incidents and the follow-up with parents and external agencies are

thorough. Leaders carefully monitor why pupils are absent from school. As a result, rates of attendance are improving and are currently above those found nationally.

- The inclusive attitudes of all staff and pupils help new pupils to adapt rapidly to the high expectations the school has of courtesy, care, respect and kindness for others.
- The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey, and all of those who spoke to inspectors, agree that behaviour is good and that the school keeps their children safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils now make good progress because of the headteacher's successful drive for improvements in the quality of teaching. This is confirmed by work in pupils' books and the school's records of pupils' progress.
- There is now a consistent approach to planning lessons that clearly sets out the expectations for the learning of pupils of different abilities, to ensure work is pitched at the right level for them. Gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are tackled by group work in classrooms and in well-targeted interventions.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. Teachers make helpful comments and suggestions that identify the next steps in pupils' learning. Consequently, pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.
- School leaders have provided teachers with much support to improve their teaching of reading. Teachers use guided reading sessions to help pupils improve their reading and comprehension skills. They ensure the content is linked well to literacy lessons, either through the topic or a focus for their writing.
- Teachers set writing activities that are engaging and purposeful. In an English lesson, pupils in Year 3 used descriptive words when writing a poem. The teacher skilfully used questioning to enthuse and motivate the pupils, and then to develop and refine their ideas, before they wrote their own versions. All pupils, including the most and least able, had different, challenging tasks. Pupils thought hard about what they were doing, greatly enjoyed the lesson and some made outstanding progress.
- Improvements in the teaching of mathematics have ensured the gaps evident in some pupils' learning, a result of previous weak teaching, have greatly narrowed. However, inconsistencies in pupils' rates of progress in mathematics remain. While expectations of what pupils can achieve are generally high, pupils are sometimes not given work that is hard enough to challenge them to make the best possible progress. Additionally, pupils do not have enough opportunity to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to investigate and solve problems, either in mathematics lessons or across the curriculum.
- The strengthened whole-school assessment and tracking system and regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress ensure that teachers have a good understanding of how well pupils are doing. This enables them to decide the action they will take to support them effectively and to help them reach their challenging targets. Nevertheless, some weaknesses remain in extending pupils' use of problem-solving skills in mathematics and in ensuring weaknesses in spelling do not hinder pupils' writing.
- Homework is used well to reinforce reading, mathematics and topic work.
- Effective teamwork by teachers and teaching assistants ensures a high level of support for all groups of pupils, including pupils who are supported through the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Good-quality help in classrooms is accelerating the progress of those who have fallen behind or who need additional help.
- Since the previous inspection, opportunities for writing across a range of subjects have increased. Although pupils achieve well in spelling, punctuation and grammar tests, there are too many errors in spellings in pupils' books because variations in the marking of incorrect spelling have led to a weakness in this area.

The achievement of pupils**is good**

- The decisive action taken by senior leaders to eliminate weak teaching and raise attainment has resulted in sustained improvement since the start of this school year. Excellent systems to track pupils' progress help the school to identify pupils who are not doing well enough and to ensure these pupils receive the support they need to help them catch up. This is a strong factor in accelerating progress across the school.
- Improved teaching has resulted in more secure development of pupils' skills, and this is noticeable in the work in their books. Pupils' progress is accelerating quickly, and attainment is rising throughout the school. This includes for those pupils who have complex needs, those learning English as an additional language and those who are most able and talented. The progress of those pupils supported by additional funding, which was a concern, is accelerating and is now good.
- Pupils reached standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 which were in line with the national average in writing and below average in reading and mathematics. The school measures pupils' skills on entry to the school, and, based on a wide range of evidence, inspectors found almost all pupils made the expected progress between Years 3 to 6, in reading, writing and mathematics. For some, the progress was good in relation to their starting points. Current school information, confirmed by work in pupils' books, shows that pupils in the present Year 6 are on course to reach at least average standards in all subjects.
- In the tests in 2014 at the end of Year 6, disadvantaged pupils were two years behind pupils nationally in reading and mathematics and one year behind in writing. When compared with their classmates, gaps in attainment were narrower in writing, where disadvantaged pupils were two terms behind, but were wide in reading and mathematics where they were four and five terms behind, respectively. As a result of the support now provided for disadvantaged pupils, the attainment gaps are now narrowing. The progress of disadvantaged pupils throughout the school is at least in line with that of other pupils in the school.
- Pupils achieve well in reading and writing because teaching is effective in developing key skills and providing many opportunities for reading widely, and writing across different subjects. Daily reading workshop activities help pupils to read fluently and write imaginatively.
- Pupils have well-developed numeracy skills. Although the progress they make in mathematics is good, it is not as strong as it is in reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils who speak English as an additional language all make good progress and achieve well. This is a result of the quick and accurate identification of these pupils' individual learning needs.
- Early identification of specific needs and the willingness of all staff to help new and returning pupils to catch up is due to the headteacher's determination to achieve the best for every pupil. However, past data demonstrated a difference in the achievement of pupils who have benefited from a long, stable involvement with the school and those who arrive at short notice. These pupils often arrive at a late stage of their primary education, with a background of underachievement and difficulties in other schools.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has significantly increased the demands made on the most-able and talented pupils in all subjects. They are given extension work at the right level for them, especially for those in Year 6 who are working at much higher levels. This has resulted in an increase in the proportion of pupils who are on track to reach higher levels in the national tests at the end of Year 6.

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	117168
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	462098

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	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Colling
Headteacher	Jenny Sherry
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2013
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