

John Rankin Junior School

Henshaw Crescent, Newbury, RG14 6ES

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

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.

- The new executive headteacher, head of school and governors have acted decisively to tackle underperformance. Progress in mathematics has improved significantly this year, ensuring that pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is good.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They take the right actions to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Leaders in mathematics and English play a successful role in improving teaching and ensuring the curriculum challenges all pupils.
- High quality training, linked to the school's priorities, is in place. Teaching is good as a result of this support.
- Pupils routinely take responsibility for making effective improvements to their work. This is because teachers make sure pupils know what they need to do next.
- A rich and varied curriculum strengthens pupils' knowledge of the world beyond their own community. Consequently, pupils are respectful of other faiths, traditions and cultures.
- Pupils use their key skills to support their learning in other subjects. This helps them to achieve well across a wide range of subjects.
- Staff and pupils share a strong set of common values. The school community is a happy and safe place because pupils take responsibility for their behaviour.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some middle leaders are less skilled in evaluating the difference their actions make to raising pupils' achievement.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make the same rapid progress in mathematics that they do in reading and writing.
- Teachers in Years 3 and 4 do not always respond quickly to information about what pupils know and can do in lessons, which means pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Parents do not know enough about how well the school is promoting good behaviour and tackling bullying.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 10 lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the head of school. In addition, they observed sessions for individual pupils and small groups. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in writing, mathematics and a range of other curriculum subjects from January to June 2015. They also observed other aspects of the school's work, including assemblies.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, middle leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met a group of pupils, listened to pupils read and spoke to many pupils informally during lessons, at lunchtime and during breaktimes.
- Inspectors spoke to parents before school, and reviewed 57 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent view, and two additional emails. They also considered 26 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's records of pupils' achievement, leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and records relating to behaviour, attendance and keeping pupils safe.

Inspection team

Abigail Wilkinson, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Dunmall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a slightly smaller-than-average junior school.
- The very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportions of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is slightly above average.
- In 2014, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has had a change of executive leadership. A number of new staff, including middle leaders, have been appointed during the academic year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the progress that disadvantaged pupils make so that it is equally good in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring all leaders, including middle leaders, are equally skilled in evaluating assessment information, so that additional support can be adapted quickly and any dips in achievement rectified.
- Ensure teaching in Years 3 and 4 makes full use of information from lessons about what pupils know and can do to increase boys' progress in writing and extend more-able pupils in mathematics.
- Further improve communication with parents so that they know more about the school's work to promote good behaviour and tackle bullying.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The new executive headteacher, skilfully supported by the head of school and governors, has quickly established a culture of improvement within the school after a period of underperformance and uncertainty. Clear expectations, robust challenge and appropriate training have ensured that staff have successfully risen to the challenge of improving achievement for all pupils.
- Senior leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Regular checks on pupils' progress ensure pupils do not fall behind. Parents value the additional support put in place for their children when this happens and are pleased with the difference it makes.
- Leaders with responsibility for English and mathematics lead by example and use assessment information to evaluate their work. They regularly share their good practice, working alongside other teachers in the school. As a result, teaching is good and continuing to improve. Some middle leaders, who hold other areas of responsibility, are not as skilled in using assessment information to quickly pick up any dips in pupils' achievement, particularly those who are disadvantaged.
- The curriculum provides breadth across a wide range of subjects. Topics such as 'temples, tombs and treasures' in history and 'saving the world' in geography engage pupils' interest. Pupils develop tolerance and respect for a wide range of cultures, beliefs and community values because they regularly look beyond their own experiences in their study of people and places. Pupils accurately apply skills from English and mathematics to support their learning in other subjects. This helps them to achieve well.
- Leaders use additional funding for primary sport well. Pupils benefit from a widened range of professional coaching, clubs and competitive tournaments. All pupils access these sporting opportunities ensuring equality for developing talent. Good links across the curriculum, such as looking at 'air resistance' in athletics, help make learning meaningful.
- Pupil premium funding ensures disadvantaged pupils achieve well in most subjects, through carefully chosen programmes of support. Carefully targeted teaching in lessons and skilfully led individual sessions have had clear impact. Although gaps have narrowed in mathematics this year, they are not closing as rapidly as they have in reading and writing where pupils attain as well as other pupils nationally.
- Leaders check teacher performance robustly. Teachers' targets help them contribute successfully to improvements in the school.
- Leaders ensure that the school community show a commitment to 'doing their best'. Pupils demonstrate responsibility in the attitudes they bring to learning, their play and in their relationships with others. No one is left out because leaders tackle all forms of discrimination well. Parents say they appreciate the nurturing environment that this creates for their children.
- There are regular opportunities for parents to talk to teachers about pupils' achievement. However, parents do not receive enough information about how successful the school has been in reducing incidents of poor behaviour and tackling bullying.
- The school's practice and procedures for keeping children safe from harm are good. Staff recognise situations when they should share any emerging concerns. Appropriate logs and records are in place.
- Local authority support is effective. Visits to check information about pupils' progress and attainment and look at samples of pupils' work help leaders to ensure they are accurate in the predictions they make about future achievement. Support brokered from external consultants and partnership schools meets the school's needs well.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is good. The governing body has recruited wisely and made sure that governors have the right skills to meet the needs of the school. Governors effectively hold leaders to account, showing tenacity in their questioning on key aspects of performance, such as achievement in mathematics and the quality of teaching. They check regularly on the impact of leaders' actions through regular visits to the school. This helps them to know the school well and focus their work on the right areas.
- Governors ensure robust arrangements for managing the performance of staff and use their good knowledge about the decision-making process relating to pay awards effectively. They swiftly challenge and tackle underperformance. Governors rightly set clear deadlines for leaders to update key policies and statutory training, including safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Relationships between adults and children are positive. There is a strong ethos of respect and responsibility shown in pupils' quick response to adult requests. The vast majority of parents agree that their children are happy at school.
- Pupils play their part in leading aspects of school life. They are proud of their various roles, including house captain, sports ambassador, school councillor and peer mediator. These roles strengthen relationships across the school age range, with older pupils taking responsibility for younger pupils.
- Movement around the school is organised and calm, particularly on the way to and from assembly and during changes from indoor to outdoor activities. Adults model good behaviour and join in small team games using the wide range of equipment available for pupils during break times. Co-operation between pupils is good as a result. Pupils show their sense of responsibility by clearing away after eating their lunch, using bins and ensuring the grounds are litter free.
- Attendance is improving and is at least in line with national figures. The family support worker provides good support to families who find getting their children to school difficult. This has ensured the number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced considerably this year.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors were overwhelmingly positive about changes in behaviour across the school. They talked enthusiastically about assemblies to celebrate the rapidly reducing numbers of pupils losing 'golden time'. Pupils said that peer mediators do not have as much to do now as pupils can 'resolve their own problems' on the playground. Records confirm that incidents of poor behaviour have reduced, particularly over the last two terms.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents responding to the online survey agree that their children feel safe in school.
- Pupils talked keenly about ways in which they could keep safe and how their lessons had helped them to know this. They showed good understanding, particularly about online safety, including cyber bullying, road safety and fire safety. Pupils said they felt safe and that they were confident adults and other pupils could help them 'sort out any problems' quickly.
- Pupils say there are few instances of bullying. Inspectors found that school records detail clearly the school's response to the small number of reported incidents. Leaders have wisely used these as an opportunity to help the school community reflect on the negative impact of bullying. However, parents responding to the survey were not always sure how the school tackled bullying and did not feel they knew enough about this area of the school's work.
- Risk assessments for all activities are carefully completed and up to date. Pupils use equipment safely both in and out of lessons. They know and keep within the boundaries of adult supervision when using the outdoor areas.

The quality of teaching is good

- The majority of teaching is good and all teaching is improving strongly. Pupils achieve well and increasing numbers of pupils are now working beyond age-related expectations. In the last two terms in particular, work in books clearly shows the majority of pupils making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress in pupils' work is strong in Years 5 and 6. Here, teachers use well-focused questions to check pupils' understanding and challenge pupils' thinking. Teachers expect pupils to explain and justify their thinking and quickly reshape activities to meet pupils' needs. Consequently, in books, there is a productive dialogue between teachers and pupils about how to move learning forward.
- In mathematics, pupils tackle problems that make them think deeply. In one lesson, pupils had to decide which information they needed to know first to solve a mathematical puzzle where shapes represented numbers. Questions such as 'How do you know?' helped teachers to check pupils' understanding throughout the session. In Years 3 and 4, teachers do not use pupils' responses to these questions to quickly provide additional support or to move more able pupils on to more demanding work.
- Pupils present their work well because teachers communicate high expectations. This ensures accuracy, particularly in mathematics, when drawing shapes, graphs and measuring angles. Written work is neat, helping pupils to effectively review and edit work.
- The strong focus on sentence skills ensures most pupils make good progress in writing. Pupils in Year 6,

for example, confidently discussed their progress in writing this year across a wide range of topics, using examples to illustrate changes and improvements in their skills. This is not the case for all pupils. In Years 3 and 4, work in books shows that teaching does not respond quickly, for example, to help boys improve their spelling and sentence skills to enhance their writing. This means that not all pupils make the rapid progress they are capable of.

- Pupils have regular and varied opportunities to read. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils prepared to perform 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', using their good reading skills to explore character and plot. In addition, skilled teaching assistants lead programmes to help pupils who find reading difficult catch up quickly.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive good support. Expectations are rightly high for these pupils and lessons motivate and challenge them.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- At the end of Year 6, in 2014, pupils attained as well as other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, pupils secured the skills, knowledge and understanding they needed to be well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- In 2014, the proportions of pupils making expected progress in reading and writing were similar to the proportions nationally. This was not the case in mathematics. Currently, work in books confirms that pupils are making good progress in mathematics, particularly in the use of calculation strategies. Leaders have focused sharply on these skills and their drive and determination have paid off. The school's assessments show that the proportion of pupils making expected or better progress this year is set to match or exceed proportions nationally.
- Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to read for pleasure and information and as a result they achieve well. They talk knowledgeably about texts they read, showing good insight into characters and their motivation. Most pupils have a broad range of strategies, including the application of phonics (the sounds letters make), to draw on to support their good reading. Those who find reading difficult receive good individual support.
- In 2014, the proportion of boys securing expected levels of attainment was not as strong as girls. Good teaching in Years 5 and 6 has addressed this successfully so that boys can move on to the next stage of their education well prepared in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils achieve well. The school's assessments indicate that the proportion of pupils securing higher levels of attainment is rising in reading, writing and mathematics. Over half of all pupils are expected to secure higher levels of attainment in reading and mathematics this year.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is in line with other pupils nationally from more favourable backgrounds in reading and writing. Gaps in attainment are less than a term in these subjects because they make good progress and catch up quickly. In contrast, the gap is wider for mathematics and pupils are over two terms behind other pupils nationally. Achievement is not outstanding because disadvantaged pupils do not make the rapid gains in mathematics that they do in reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress, particularly in mathematics. Support is skilful and sensitive. There is particularly effective support for pupils with additional medical needs.

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	109825
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	461931

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	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Douglas
Headteacher	Conrad North
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 July 2012
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