

Chesswood Junior School

Chesswood Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN112AA

Inspection dates	24–25 November 2015
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Too little teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Teachers do not always check carefully what pupils understand and develop learning further as soon as pupils are ready.
- Pupils are now making the gains in learning expected of them, given their starting points, but too few make good progress in all aspects of their work.
- The most-able pupils are not always offered enough challenge.
- Too many pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are not making sufficiently good progress to help them catch up with other pupils.
- Leaders do not fully take into account pupils' achievement when evaluating the school's performance and are over generous.
- School leaders do not routinely evaluate the impact of actions taken to improve the school. Improvement planning lacks precision.
- Governors, keen to support school leaders through a period of significant change, do not hold them to account.
- School leaders do not hold teachers to account for the achievement of pupils they teach.
- There is not enough leadership capacity in the school to drive the necessary improvements.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors promote a positive, caring vision where the well-being of every pupil matters.
- Strongly held values based on mutual support and the personal development of pupils pervade the school.
- Parents are supportive of the school. They speak very highly of the way school staff respond to their children's needs.
- Pupils behave well and are proud of their school. They feel safe and enjoy their learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is strong and supported by a broad and balanced curriculum.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to ensure that all pupils, including the most-able and disadvantaged pupils, make good progress from their different starting points by ensuring that:
 - all teachers make effective use of information about pupils' learning to set work at the right level and move pupils on as soon as they are ready
 - teachers' feedback to pupils about their work helps them make faster progress
 - information about pupils' performance is used to plan the next steps for their learning.

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders make stronger links between self-evaluation and improvement planning in order to have greater impact on outcomes for pupils
 - use the newly introduced system for assessment to closely monitor the progress of all groups of pupils
 - governors use performance management systems to hold leaders and teachers to account for the performance of the school
 - leadership at all levels is strengthened, particularly by developing the role, responsibilities and accountabilities of subject leaders.

- Hold an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management **requires improvement**

- Leaders have shown high levels of commitment to lead the school through a period of considerable change. At the end of the last academic year, the school changed from a middle to a junior school. Year groups 7 and 6 left the school, and year groups 3 and 4 joined the school. Over half of the pupils currently on roll joined the school in September. In addition, there has been a significant building programme. The demands of these changes on the school leadership led to a reduction in the level of monitoring and leaders have not ensured that teaching is good throughout the school.
- Leaders do not check pupils' progress through the school in a coordinated way. They do not investigate well enough whether all pupils make good progress from different starting points. This includes the most-able and disadvantaged pupils. As a result, leaders' plans for improvement lack precision about groups of pupils and subjects where improvement is required. Furthermore, there are no clear milestones against which leaders and governors regularly check the impact of actions taken.
- The school's self-evaluation is over generous. School leaders have not used systematic performance management to improve the quality of teaching in the school. They do not routinely or rigorously check that the steps they have taken to improve the school have made a positive difference to pupils' achievement.
- Additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils has not been used effectively to close the gap by the end of Key Stage 2. Leaders have introduced a range of steps to help pupils progress rapidly, but they are not tracking the progress of pupils closely enough to accurately evaluate the impact of their actions.
- Feedback by teachers is regular and follows the school's policy, but it is not always effective in guiding pupils about how to improve their work. As a result, pupils do not always know what they need to do to progress well towards meeting their targets. In addition, pupils in some classes do not always read teachers' comments written in their books and act upon the guidance given.
- The headteacher, his senior team and governors share a clear vision for education at the school. They are committed to achieve improvement, within a caring ethos. The atmosphere within the school is vibrant and well ordered. Leaders have the full confidence of parents and staff.
- Relationships between staff and the school leaders are positive. Many staff comment that they feel valued and well supported to improve.
- The school's curriculum has a strong focus on creativity and life skills, and parents and pupils were consulted during its development. Several pupils were able to describe how they had overcome difficulties by drawing on their 'ACRO' skills, which pervade the curriculum. These are: attitude, creativity, relationships and organisation. Many parents were positive about the rich curriculum and described how much their children enjoyed their learning.
- School leaders are focusing on developing the themes and coverage of their new curriculum and do not systematically evaluate how well it meets the learning needs of the pupils, particularly those in year 3, who are new to the school. There are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of homework throughout the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, preparing them securely for life in modern Britain. The school's values-based culture is a strength. Pupils show kind and caring responses to each other. They are developing understanding of democracy by voting members onto the school council, where some hold positions of responsibility. Pupils are tolerant of the views of others, listening carefully when others are talking and taking good account of their opinions or ideas. They show a range of interpersonal skills and an understanding of the world. Pupils enjoy learning about current affairs through their daily viewing of the children's news programme 'Newsround'. Having seen the devastation caused by an earthquake in Nepal, pupils leaders raised considerable funds by organising a sponsored walk.
- Physical education and sports funding is used effectively to increase participation in extra-curricular sport, especially by girls and disadvantaged pupils. There are a very wide range of clubs on offer. In addition, a significant number of pupils take part in sports leadership training programmes. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoyed physical education at the school and how it contributed positively to their personal development.
- The local authority's evaluation of the school is too optimistic and there has not been enough challenge to the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the governing body bring a wide range of expertise and experience from their different backgrounds. Governors feel that they know the school well. Their focus has been on supporting school leaders through a period of turbulence. Because of this, school leaders were not challenged enough to produce the improvements required, and governance lacks rigour.
- Governors are developing a clearer understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are better placed to ensure that the improvements needed to make this a good school come about.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are trained to an appropriate level and maintain high levels of vigilance with regard to the welfare of pupils. The large majority of parents who contributed to the online Parent View questionnaire or who spoke to inspectors said they feel that their children are safe in school. When necessary, staff work well with parents and relevant agencies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Where teaching is strong, pupils are set tasks which provide plenty of opportunities to deepen learning and they can achieve well. In these classes, adults give timely and effective guidance to help pupils progress faster.
- Progress in some classes is slower because teachers do not always provide enough challenge to make sure that pupils of all abilities make rapid progress. Teachers do not make it clear enough what pupils need to do to improve.
- In some classes, particularly in Years 5 and 6, pupils achieve well when activities are well matched to their starting points. In other classes, especially Years 3 and 4, achievement is limited because the work is either too easy or too difficult for some pupils. In English and mathematics, work in some books shows that pupils are not moved on to more challenging tasks and spend too much time repeating the same type of work. In a few instances, across a range of subjects, teachers moved on without checking that pupils had understood, and errors and misconceptions were not picked up and addressed.
- Teachers' use of questioning to check pupils' understanding or to move pupils on to more challenging activities varies between classes. Where it is most effective, teachers probe pupils' understanding and skilfully help pupils find answers to problems posed. In other classes, pupils are given too much time to complete simple tasks. This hinders progress, especially that of the most-able pupils, who are sometimes given the same work to do as other pupils. Eventually, they move onto more difficult work, but this does not always happen quickly enough.
- Specialist teachers in music, information and communication technology and physical education provide strong subject knowledge. Pupils also benefit from the provision of a wide range of equipment and the opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities in these areas.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Teachers work closely with their teaching assistants, who know the pupils well. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the care and development of pupils who have special educational needs. As a result, these pupils are closing the gap with other pupils.
- A few parents expressed concern that they did not receive valuable information about their child's progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is a happy place, and the great majority of pupils enjoy learning and show pride in their school.
- Pupils take on responsibilities enthusiastically and enjoy contributing to school life. Many pupils in Years 3 and 4, who are new to the school, appreciate the care shown by Year 6 pupils who check how they are feeling at break-time.
- The emphasis on the development of personal skills, such as resilience and independence, helps pupils to become self-aware and self-confident.
- A very large majority of parents agree that their children enjoy school and feel safe.

- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they have a concern. They are very clear about how to avoid danger when using the internet. There are no problems with racism, derogatory language is rarely used and, if bullying does occur, it is always dealt with promptly by staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Most parents have positive views about behaviour in the school.
- Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their 'BRIGHTSPARKS' code, which sets out expectations for them to be kind, courteous and respectful. They strive to keep to the code and co-operate well with each other.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, listening to the teachers carefully and showing that they want to do their best. Pupils' good behaviour in their lessons means that learning is rarely disrupted.
- The level of pupils' enthusiasm for their learning is directly linked to how well their teacher matches the work to their needs and abilities. Where teachers fail to provide enough challenge, some pupils lose their concentration and their attention wavers. In contrast, where teachers provide work that closely matches pupils' needs, they work very hard and apply themselves wholeheartedly to their task.
- Behaviour on the playground is well managed. Pupils enjoy the range of activities and equipment they can use.
- Overall attendance is a little higher than last year but the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is too low.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- The progress of pupils from their different starting points varies too much across year groups and within subjects for outcomes to be good overall.
- Attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2015 was broadly in line with the national average in reading and writing. It was well below average in mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Progress in writing improved and matches national levels. However, progress in reading and mathematics declined and is low, compared with national levels.
- During the last two years, the school's system for gathering information about pupils' performance has changed twice. This lack of continuity means that the school's information about pupil progress is incomplete. However, results of tests administered by the school show that pupils in Years 4 and 5 made better progress in mathematics, reading, spelling and grammar than Year 6. There was no systematic assessment of writing during the last academic year.
- Work in books shows that the rate of progress and the standards attained by pupils across all subjects are broadly in line with those expected for their age.
- The most-able pupils are not always given sufficient challenge to learn as rapidly as they might. In mathematics, for example, they do not always acquire higher-level skills of problem solving because the work is not adapted sufficiently well for them. In English and mathematics, some of the most-able pupils are provided with work that is similar to that of other pupils; this does not extend or challenge them sufficiently. As a consequence, the most-able pupils make secure, rather than good, progress.
- Generally, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are mixed. At the end of Key Stage 2, progress made by disadvantaged pupils is well below that of other pupils within the school and nationally. However, current gaps between the achievement of this group and others are closing.
- Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs are now making progress in line with that of other pupils in the school. This is due to well targeted deployment of adults to provide effective support, teaching that is better suited to the pupils' needs and the good oversight of provision by the special educational needs co-ordinator.

School details

Unique reference number	125961
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10005723

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	518
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robin Thelwell
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Andrew Jolley
Telephone number	01903 204141
Website	http://www.chesswood.w-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	office@chesswood.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 July 2012

Information about this school

- Chesswood junior school is much larger than most primary schools.
- The school changed from a middle school, with years 4–7, to a junior school, with years 3–6, in September 2015.
- The school meets the government’s floor standards, which are the minimum expectation for pupils’ attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and looked after children) is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, across all classes, seven jointly with school leaders. The lead inspector also visited seven classes with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, middle leaders, three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work, heard pupils read, observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and at lunchtime and talked informally with staff, pupils and parents.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, taking into account the 109 responses on the online parent questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also considered the 51 free text question responses submitted by parents. Responses to the 14 online questionnaires completed by staff and 28 by pupils and the school's own survey information about the views of parents and pupils were also taken into account.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including those to do with safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of visits by the local authority, the school's evaluation of its own performance and the school's improvement plans.

Inspection team

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