

Fairhouse Community Junior School

Long Riding, Basildon, Essex SS14 1QP

Inspection dates	20–21 April 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, with good support from governors and senior leaders, has successfully developed the school's capacity to improve further since the last inspection. As a result, there has been rapid improvement in teaching and pupils' achievements and the school continues to improve.
- Leaders promote pupils' physical well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Teaching is now good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to ensure pupils acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills quickly. They use their knowledge of pupils' previous learning well to ask probing questions to deepen their thinking.
- Teaching assistants work effectively with teachers to support pupils' learning. They make good use of resources and plan interesting activities to motivate pupils. Staff have good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and sometimes it is outstanding. They have good attitudes to learning and enjoy school. This is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality.
- Pupils make good and a few make outstanding progress in a range of subjects, including mathematics and English. The school is effectively closing the previous gaps in pupils' learning. As a result, pupils in Year 6 are well prepared for secondary education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally expectations for learning of the most-able pupils are not high enough, which limits their achievement.
- Sometimes, pupils who have special educational needs or disability are given tasks that are too hard, which limits their progress.
- Leaders are not examining attendance information deeply enough to identify those pupils with the poorest attendance and to develop effective strategies to improve it.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching and raise achievement by making sure that teachers consistently:
 - set high expectations for the learning of the most-able pupils
 - provide pupils who have special educational needs or disability with tasks that are not too hard in order to motivate their learning.

- Ensure that leaders examine the attendance information of the few pupils with the poorest attendance more rigorously to develop effective strategies to improve it.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has a clear commitment and drive for improvement and benefits from good support from senior leaders and governors. Since the last inspection, leaders have increased the capacity to further improve by developing leadership skills. This has led to significant improvement in the quality of teaching and assessment, which enables all pupils to learn effectively and make good progress. Self-evaluation is mainly accurate and the school uses this well to establish clear priorities for improvement. Leaders respond quickly to any shortcomings identified so that the school continues to improve. They examined the 2015 national test results and identified a sharp decline in reading. They immediately put effective strategies in place to improve reading, which has led to improvements in the teaching of reading and good progress in reading.
- The leadership of teaching is good. The headteacher has successfully implemented thorough systems to manage the performance of teachers where good teaching is rewarded and any weaknesses are tackled. Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching through frequent visits to classrooms, examining work in pupils' books and systematically reviewing the progress of pupils across the school. The headteacher provides good opportunities for training and developing staff to improve practice. In discussion, newly qualified teachers and teaching assistants highlighted the effectiveness of training that has improved their practice.
- Teachers with leadership responsibilities for subjects are making a good contribution to school development by implementing the new curriculum effectively and developing new systems of assessment to track and record pupils' progress within their subjects.
- The inclusion and behaviour managers are regularly monitoring the attendance, behaviour and safety of the few pupils who attend the children's support service for part of their education. They are successfully implementing strategies to improve behaviour and attendance. This has led to a reduction in exclusions and an increase in attendance year on year. However, they have not examined data thoroughly enough to identify the poorest attenders and to develop more effective strategies to improve their attendance.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of pupils. The wide range of subjects, including French, are taught discretely and learning is enriched through topic days, such as the science day. There are also good opportunities to enrich learning through a wide range of clubs such as the breakfast and study club, sporting clubs and trips to places of interest, including a residential trip.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including British values, well through relevant topics in the curriculum and through assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to make the right choices, and to show respect towards others. They learn about democracy through the school council, and the green and gold reward system develops their ability to make the right choices as they learn about the rule of law. They learn to respect others within the school community, which was very evident during the inspection.
- Leaders are making good use of pupil premium funding to provide additional support for pupils to enable them to make the same progress as their classmates. They are focusing resources on pupils in Years 3 and 4 to accelerate their learning. As a result, gaps in the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils compared with those of others nationally are closing.
- Leaders are making good use of primary sports funding to pay for new equipment and develop links with local sports coaches. This has led to pupils' increased participation in sporting events, good development of teaching skills among staff and an increase in participation in games competitions between schools.
- Leaders are promoting equality of opportunity well to enable all groups of pupils to make equally good progress and provide them with the same opportunities to participate in all the school offers. The school tackles any form of discrimination well, especially through promoting harmonious relationships.
- The local authority and the Basildon Excellence Partnership are providing good support and challenge for the school through regular reviews of its work and by providing good opportunities for professional development, such as access to training to develop teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are successfully holding the school to account for its work and challenging the work of leaders to ensure continuous improvement. They are using data alongside the school's information about the progress pupils are making effectively to influence priorities for improvement.

- Governors have a realistic view of teaching and oversee effective systems for managing staff performance, including that of the headteacher.
- Governors are challenging the school effectively on its use of pupil premium and primary sports funding to achieve value for money.
- They are ensuring safeguarding requirements are met and that the school is promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including fundamental British values, well.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Thorough procedures for checking the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children are in place, and all training is up to date. The school works closely with parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved significantly since the last inspection when it emerged as requiring improvement. Work in pupils' books, the school's tracking information about the progress pupils are making over time and leaders' visits to lessons show that teaching, learning and assessment are now good.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to ensure that pupils develop skills, knowledge and understanding quickly, as seen in a lesson to develop pupils' skills of persuasive writing where the teacher challenged them to provide arguments for and against wearing school uniform.
- Teachers make good use of their knowledge of pupils' previous learning to ask probing questions to deepen their thinking. In mathematics lessons, teachers use every opportunity to ask pupils to explain their reasoning in mathematics and there are several well-chosen mathematical challenges displayed around the school where pupils are required to estimate and solve real-life problems.
- Teachers provide regular homework to pupils to consolidate their learning.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good, as seen in pupils' work across a range of subjects such as history, geography and science.
- Teachers plan interesting activities. During the inspection, Year 3 pupils visited Hyde Hall to support their learning in science, which they thoroughly enjoyed. Teachers also use well-chosen resources such as computers for research and string and counters to measure fractions.
- Teachers are using good assessment systems to track and record the progress of pupils and they provide good feedback, consistent with the school's marking policy. As a result, pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Support for pupils' learning is good. The school's monitoring of lessons over time shows that teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs or disability and pupils who need to catch up quickly. However, occasionally tasks given to pupils with special educational needs are too difficult, which slows their progress.
- Teachers maintain good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well, which has a positive effect on pupils' learning and progress.
- Expectations for learning are usually high, although sometimes they are not high enough for the most-able pupils, as seen in their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Strong welfare support through the inclusion team and good links with external agencies ensure good pastoral support to promote pupils' well-being. The breakfast study club helps to settle pupils into school routines. Pupils do their best in lessons, listen carefully to staff and follow instructions well.
- Pupils are immensely proud of their school and make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their work shows that they appreciate and celebrate different faiths and other cultural traditions. Pupils show a clear understanding of British values by respecting others and abiding by the school rules. The green and gold merit systems are effective in promoting pupils' personal development.

- Older pupils take responsibility as play leaders and peer mediators to support younger ones. They have good relationships with one another.
- Pupils say bullying is rare and many sign a bullying oath to prevent any form of bullying. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Most parents agree that bullying is rare and should it occur, it is usually dealt with quickly. Pupils know how to use the internet safely and they say that they feel safe in school.
- The school provides a safe and secure environment for pupils. Staff assess all potential risks to pupils' safety, including when they attend the children's support service.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and sometimes their behaviour is outstanding. Systems for managing behaviour across the school have been strengthened since the last inspection. The behaviour manager ensures consistency in the use of rewards and sanctions and has developed good systems for monitoring lunchtime behaviour, and as a result, pupils are also well behaved in the playground.
- Exclusion rates have fallen since the last inspection. Parents and pupils say that behaviour is usually good. Their good behaviour contributes well to their learning.
- Attendance has improved steadily since the last inspection, and wide-ranging interventions are proving effective. The attendance of many pupils is improving, although a few pupils are not attending school regularly enough. Pupils arrive punctually for lessons.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding. Although no incidents of inappropriate behaviour were witnessed during the inspection, the school's records show that there are a few incidents of minor disruption in lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes are good because work in pupils' books and the school's tracking of pupils' progress over time show that pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Attainment on entry is much lower than that of other schools.
- In 2015, pupils achieved broadly average standards in English and mathematics. Standards were above average in writing and mathematics but below average in reading. Standards have risen steadily since the last inspection. Standards in reading fell sharply in 2015 but leaders quickly took effective action. For example, a daily 'reading for meaning' session was implemented and this has led to current pupils making good progress in reading. They make good use of phonics (the sounds represented by letters) to read unfamiliar words.
- The school's accurate records and pupils' work show that current pupils are making equally good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school and some are making exceptional progress. Reading records show that pupils are reading more widely and often and are building their confidence in reading.
- Pupils across year groups are making good progress over time in a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 took great pride in showing the good progress they were making in football, baking, religious education, boccia, playing the ukulele, history, science and art. During the inspection, pupils in Year 5 gave an outstanding musical performance to their parents.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making at least the same progress and sometimes better progress than their peers because the school is working hard to fill the gaps between their attainment compared with that of their classmates in Years 3 and 4. The school is accelerating their progress and successfully tackling the legacy of underachievement when they entered Year 3. The gaps in their attainment compared with that of others nationally are narrowing steadily in Years 3, 4 and 5.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress because they benefit from good support for learning to meet their individual needs. Occasionally their progress is limited when they are given tasks that are too difficult.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who need to catch up quickly are making good progress from their different starting points.

- The most-able pupils make good progress from their higher starting points. Their work over time shows that they are reaching above-average standards and often exceeding the progress they are expected to make because staff usually provide tasks to extend their thinking. However on occasion, they said they were given work that was too easy, which was also confirmed by work seen in their books.
- The school's monitoring shows that the few pupils who attend alternative provision make good progress in basic skills because they benefit from good support for their emotional and behavioural needs, which helps them to re-engage with learning and develop more positive attitudes to school.

School details

Unique reference number	114899
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10011781

This inspection 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	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joyce Sweeney
Headteacher	Jennifer McCutcheon
Telephone number	01268 523960
Website	www.fairhousejuniorschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@fairhouse-jun.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than most primary schools.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is below that found in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is much higher than in most schools. The pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Two pupils attend alternative provision at the children's support service in Basildon daily, as part of a managed move to support their emotional and behavioural needs.
- Since the previous inspection, the leadership team has been strengthened and there has been a high turnover of staff.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a variety of lessons and activities, including a musical performance for parents by Year 5 pupils, and two assemblies. Most of these were carried out with the headteacher or a senior leader.
- Inspectors listened to a few pupils read and examined samples of pupils' work in different subjects in every year group.
- Inspectors looked at data and the school's tracking information to determine the progress pupils are making across the school.
- As there were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, inspectors held informal discussions with 10 parents who accompanied their children to school and 14 parents who attended the Year 5 musical performance. Inspectors also considered the small number of written responses from parents, and 15 completed questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors held meetings with the chair of the Basildon Excellence Partnership and the local authority's representative. They also held meetings with school leaders, four teaching assistants, newly qualified teachers, two groups of pupils and four members of the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including: safeguarding policies and procedures; records of behaviour and attendance figures; school self-evaluation documentation; and the school improvement plan.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Wayne Harris

Ofsted Inspector

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