

# Redbourn Junior School

Long Cott, Redbourn, St Albans AL3 7EX

## Inspection dates

19–20 April 2016

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The many changes in teaching staff since the last inspection mean that some year groups have underachieved.
- Standards are not as high as they should be, given pupils' starting points, especially among the older classes.
- Teaching is not consistently good. There is some variation in the quality of provision between classes.
- The most-able pupils are sometimes not sufficiently challenged to reach their potential.
- At times, pupils are unsure about what to do to be successful in their learning and this slows their progress.
- The new assessment system is not having a full impact yet in helping teachers to measure how well pupils who have special educational needs or disability are performing.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new leadership team has brought about rapid improvement this year, building on the work of the interim headteacher.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They have positive attitudes to learning and show one another respect.
- Leaders, managers and governors have a clear vision for improving the school and have won the support of parents, staff and pupils.
- Governors know the school well and provide a good level of challenge to senior leaders.

## **Full report**

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

- Make teaching consistently good and so accelerate pupils' progress by:
  - ensuring that the most-able pupils are given work that challenges them sufficiently
  - using good practice already in the school to ensure that it becomes typical across all year groups
  - ensuring that pupils are clear about what they have to do to be successful in their learning.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by:
  - using the new assessment system to ensure that initiatives are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes, especially for those pupils who have special educational needs or disability.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- In the short time it has been running, the new leadership team has significantly improved many aspects of the school's work. The school went through a turbulent time for more than 18 months following the previous inspection, resulting in many changes of staff. Leaders and managers have shown they have the capacity to bring about rapid improvements. This is because of their determined and systematic approach to dealing with weaknesses.
- During the period of instability, the school's performance declined and its effectiveness reduced. The interim headteacher began the process of improvement, starting with teaching and learning. The present leadership team has built on this work well so that teaching has been improving rapidly. Leaders, managers and governors have changed the culture of the school and all staff have embraced the new expectations. They are committed to the leaders' vision for improving the school.
- The new and relatively inexperienced teaching staff are supported well by leaders and managers, who check their performance regularly and give helpful feedback. Joint training with staff from the outstanding infant school next door is also having a positive impact. For example, the day before the inspection, both teams of staff were working together to produce a portfolio of writing expectations across all primary phases.
- Subject leaders know their areas of responsibility well. They are increasingly influencing their subjects and are having a positive impact on the provision.
- Leaders place great emphasis on pupils' understanding of British values, such as democracy and the rule of law. Pupils vote for school councillors and 'eco-warriors'. Pupils have many opportunities to take leadership roles within the school such as play leaders and 'peer mediators', where they help to settle minor disputes. They take a pride in the way they have helped to improve behaviour in the school. As a result, pupils respect people's differences and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils have a good awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. For example, Year 5 pupils were putting forward balanced arguments for a range of moral dilemmas such as whether animals should be kept in zoos.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum with good-quality specialist teaching in French, physical education, computing and music. These activities enhance pupils' experiences. Pupils take part in a wide range of clubs and have regular visits to places of interest. For instance, the Year 6 pupils visited the Hendon RAF Museum as part of their work on the Second World War.
- The use of the pupil premium has become more effective as leaders keep a closer eye on how it is spent and the impact it is having on pupils' progress. The funding supports pupils' academic progress and also subsidises trips, music lessons and clubs.
- A new assessment system has been recently introduced and is giving teachers a better understanding of how pupils in their classes are performing. There is still work to be done for staff to make best use of this system, especially in assessing the effectiveness of interventions to improve outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- The school spends the sports premium effectively. Pupils have had access to a wide range of sports, including lacrosse. They are enjoying increasing success in local tournaments. The cricket team reached the county finals last year and the netball team has won a local title. Teachers are benefiting from professional development and support from specialist coaches.
- The local authority has provided some good support for the school, especially through improving the use of practical resources in mathematics and in guided reading. The school's improvement partner offers a good degree of challenge to school leaders.
- Relationships with parents have improved considerably this year. A new parents' forum gives parents the opportunity to air their views. Many parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, or who spoke to an inspector, recognised the improvements that are being made.
- Links with the infant school have increased with the arrival of the new headteacher. Staff are training together, looking at standards together and sharing best practice.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors know their roles and responsibilities well. They provide a good level of challenge for school leaders and ask probing questions.

- Governors ensure that they are well informed and that they have the skills represented on the governing body that will support them in carrying out their duties. For example, governors' expertise includes recruitment and public relations.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Rigorous systems ensure that pupils are safe. Staff have all had training and know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. Parents are happy that the school keeps their children safe.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because the most-able pupils are sometimes not sufficiently challenged. They finish work quickly because it is too easy for them. In other cases, pupils are not sure about what they are supposed to be doing to be successful in their learning. This means the pace of their learning slows.
- There is some unevenness in the quality of provision between classes of the same year group, even when teachers are working from the same plans. For example, the use of questioning was observed to be more probing in one English lesson than in the other. This meant that pupils in the one class thought more deeply about their work than those in the other class and made more rapid progress in their understanding.
- While much of the work in books is good and improving, there remains some variation in topic books. Some teachers have higher expectations of pupils' work and presentation than others.
- With so many changes of staff since the previous inspection, a large proportion of teachers are relatively inexperienced. They have some opportunities to observe the best practice that goes on in the school. However, this is something that leaders recognise can be developed further to bring all teaching up to the standard of the best.
- Relationships are positive in classrooms. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They welcome being shown approaches that make them more confident as learners, such as 'the six Bs', a range of ideas to help them when they are stuck on their work before they ask the teacher.
- The teaching of guided reading has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The school has invested in a wide range of good-quality reading material, and all pupils benefit from reading regularly with an adult. Pupils work on a range of tasks that develop their higher skills in reading.
- New approaches to the teaching of mathematics mean that progress is improving for many pupils. Teachers are focusing more on giving pupils mathematical problems to solve and are encouraging pupils to explain their thinking. Pupils have access to a wide range of apparatus to support them in developing their mathematical concepts.
- Teachers make good use of resources to engage pupils and promote discussion. For example, Year 3 pupils watched a vintage news report and examined photographs concerning the high-wire walker in New York who crossed between the Twin Towers.
- Pupils have interesting tasks for homework and use online resources to help them, such as when they recently designed a 90th birthday card for the Queen.
- Teachers work effectively with teaching assistants to support learning. They brief teaching assistants well and make sure that they have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Teachers make a real effort to place the work in a context that is relevant and interesting to pupils. For example, Year 4 pupils considered electrical safety in the home. Year 5 pupils thought about the differences between persuasive writing and forming a balanced argument. Year 6 pupils took part in a drama about the effects of a sudden change in their environment, such as a violent storm, and how this would make them feel.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** is good

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are polite to one another and to adults. They are confident to talk about their learning in class.

- The school has adopted an approach to help pupils become resilient and persevere, to have a 'can do' attitude and to gain insight into their learning. This means that pupils take an increasing interest in how well they are doing and want to improve their work.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They know about different types of bullying. They are confident that there is someone to go to if they are worried about anything. They say that bullying is very rare but dealt with very effectively should it occur.
- Pupils take pride in many aspects of school life. They are keen to show leadership. The engagement of peer mediators, for example, has an impact on resolving playground disputes. Pupils enjoy being play leaders and eco-warriors. As members of the school council, they feel they have a voice and can make a difference. For example, the school council organised a 'bake off' event and raised funds for charity.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have plenty to occupy them outside the classroom and their behaviour on the playground is very good. Play leaders ensure that they have the equipment they need.
- Behaviour has improved greatly since the new headteacher arrived. Staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently and are seen to be fair.
- Occasionally, pupils lose concentration if they are not sure about what they are doing.
- The school environment has changed significantly for the better. Pupils look after any equipment with care. There are attractive displays which celebrate pupils' work. There is no litter. Pupils wear their uniforms with pride.
- Attendance is now above the national average. Persistent absence has declined. Staff follow up any absence effectively and a variety of rewards successfully encourage pupils to come to school every day.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **require improvement**

- Disrupted teaching in the past meant that some of the older year groups underachieved. For example, pupils in one of the current Year 6 classes had seven different teachers when they were in Year 5. As a result, standards had dropped to average when pupils left in 2015.
- Pupils join the school with standards that are consistently well above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- This year, these high standards have been maintained in Year 3 due to improvements in teaching and learning.
- Improvements in teaching across the school mean that progress is better this year and standards are rising. However, because of the legacy of underachievement, in some older year groups attainment is not yet where it should be.
- The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is in line with other pupils and is increasingly good. Teachers now take responsibility for providing the right support for pupils and monitoring their progress. Teachers know the pupils well. They are sometimes not clear on the impact of interventions, however, because they are not using the new assessment system forensically enough.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils varies but is improving. Teachers know who they are and check their progress closely. Outcomes for these pupils are in line with other pupils generally.
- The most-able pupils are sometimes not challenged enough so do not exceed age-related expectations as much as they ought to. At times pupils find the work too easy for them.
- Outcomes for guided reading are improving as a result of a more focused approach to teaching reading skills and the purchase of good-quality texts. Pupils' wider reading is having a beneficial impact on their writing.
- Outcomes for mathematics are improving because pupils are developing their mathematical thinking well through problem solving and can access mathematical apparatus if they need to.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117288
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10011831

This inspection 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>	255
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lucy Eckley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nathan Hairon
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 626489
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.redbournjm.herts.sch.uk">www.redbournjm.herts.sch.uk</a>
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19–20 June 2014

## Information about this school

- The school is average in size compared with most primary schools.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after children) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- An interim headteacher ran the school from September 2014 to March 2015. The current headteacher joined the school in March 2015.
- There have been many changes to teaching staff since the previous inspection.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in 27 lessons or parts of lessons, most of them jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and, with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, looked closely at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of the school's documents including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports and safeguarding records. They considered evidence of the school's partnership work and the information provided for families.
- A meeting was held with a group of older pupils chosen at random and with peer mediators, eco-warriors and members of the school council. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other staff on a wide range of subjects, including safeguarding arrangements and their professional development. The lead inspector talked to the chair of the governing body and two other governors, and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors also met the headteacher from the feeder infant school.
- Inspectors considered the 70 responses to Parent View. The inspection team also considered comments about the school posted electronically, and spoke informally to some parents in the playground.
- The views of 10 members of staff who completed questionnaires were also taken into account.

## Inspection team

Nick Butt, lead inspector  
Caroline Dawes  
Henry Weir

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Ofsted Inspector

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