

William Austin Junior School

Austin Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 1UA

Inspection dates	18–19 May 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, working in close partnership with the deputy headteacher, has successfully established a culture of high expectations across the school. This has helped the school to improve considerably since its previous inspection.
- Pupils thrive in the positive atmosphere, rising to the demands of a challenging curriculum. They are very well prepared for their next step in education by the end of Year 6.
- Over the last two years, sustained and accelerated progress across the school means that pupils are now achieving well in English and mathematics.
- Differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils have narrowed or been eliminated.
- Key factors in teaching which have helped to raise levels of attainment include effective planning across year groups and consistently good marking and feedback which pupils routinely act on to improve their work.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are keen to learn and enjoy lessons.
- Pupils feel safe because they are well looked after and cared for.
- The wide range of subjects taught is very well supplemented with an extensive range of clubs and enrichment activities such as world book day.
- A strong and effective focus on staff development has enabled the quality of teaching to improve well since the previous inspection. It is now good.
- Effective systems and processes for leading and managing the school are well established. Leaders at all levels are working cohesively to improve the school further.
- Governors are improving their roles well. They ask searching questions and are increasingly involved in checking for themselves how well the school is working.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes, work is too hard for lower-attaining pupils or not quite hard enough for the most able.
- Teachers do not always give pupils enough time to practise what they are learning or complete the work they have been given.
- Good initiatives in promoting pupils' skills in using more sophisticated English are not fully embedded. This is holding pupils back from making more rapid progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are given work that is hard enough
 - providing work for lower attainers that is not too hard
 - providing enough support to lower attainers if they are finding work too difficult
 - giving pupils enough time to complete work or practise the skills they have been learning.

- Raise the standard of pupils' English more quickly so that they make outstanding progress in both English and mathematics by:
 - embedding the use and effectiveness of the new writing programme across the school
 - developing pupils' use of mathematical language and language for reasoning to help them tackle more complex word problems and explain their reasoning
 - providing more opportunities for writing across the curriculum to be more analytical and evaluative so pupils develop greater competency using the language needed to explain more complex ideas
 - ensuring that all leaders focus well on how effectively more advanced learners of English as an additional language are acquiring depth and fluency in their use of English.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and her deputy have established effective leadership across the school so that leaders at all levels are working cohesively and harmoniously in the pursuit of common aims and priorities. As a result, most staff understand the goals that the school is aiming to achieve.
- Consistently high expectations are set for the work of adults and pupils, and rigorous monitoring by leaders at all levels helps to ensure that all are doing their best to meet these high expectations.
- Leaders approach school development in a systematic way and take well-targeted actions to secure key improvements. Initiatives are evaluated with care to check their impact on pupils' learning.
- Pupils' learning, achievement, well-being and personal development are at the heart of all that the school does. The headteacher and her deputy demonstrate a passion for raising achievement and pursuing excellence. Bringing in new ways of working and raising the bar have not been popular with everyone but this has not deterred the determination of the headteacher and her deputy.
- Training and professional development are carefully targeted using information from the school's monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment. A wide range of training activities are used to support staff in developing and improving their skills and expertise, especially in the classroom. Middle leaders are appreciative of the opportunities they have had to develop their roles.
- Subject leaders are thoughtful and reflective about how they are taking their subjects forward and raising achievement. Those leading mathematics and English have pinpointed quite sharply the areas where further work is needed to raise achievement further: reasoning skills in mathematics and developing more sophistication and fluency in writing in English.
- In English, a new programme is making a notable difference in supporting the development in the flow and quality of pupils' writing. However, this programme has not been embedded fully across the school.
- The school has established good systems for checking pupils' progress and assessing how well pupils are acquiring new knowledge and skills. Pupils' progress is checked frequently and leaders are quick to pick up any who are falling behind or likely to fall behind.
- Good attention is being paid to equality of opportunity. Leaders use assessment information reasonably well to check on the progress and attainment of key groups of pupils. Systems are being developed further to enable even sharper focus on different groups. Occasionally, a middle leader is somewhat reliant on senior staff to provide or examine assessment information in a systematic enough way.
- There is reasonable, and growing, awareness of the wider English language learning needs of pupils who have English as an additional language and are at an advanced level of learning English. These pupils still have some gaps, especially in relation to English language that will help them to explain more complex ideas and thinking. Not all leaders are focusing sharply enough on the needs of this group. The new writing programme and the focus on reasoning in mathematics are particularly helpful for these pupils.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used very effectively and has had a very positive impact in narrowing gaps between this group and other pupils. Indeed, gaps have pretty much closed or are too small to be significant. Sometimes, disadvantaged pupils do better than others.
- The school provides a rich and vibrant curriculum which supports pupils well in becoming well-rounded individuals with a wide range of skills and knowledge. Specialist teachers in subjects like computing, French, music and physical education (PE) ensure pupils develop depth of learning and master key skills.
- The programme for personal, social, health and economic education dovetails very well with subjects such as religious knowledge, as well as assemblies and visitors, to promote strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development among pupils. These opportunities also help pupils to learn about important values such as democracy, liberty, the rule of law and tolerance and respect for diversity. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for modern-day Britain.
- The sports premium has been used to fund a wide range of sporting and physical activities, such as Indian dancing, cheerleading, hockey and gymnastics which pupils enjoy immensely. Funding has also been used to improve teachers' skills and subject knowledge in PE. Pupils are involved in competitive sports and have had good success in local and national competitions. The impact of the spending is well evaluated and is ensuring that high-quality sports and PE provision will be sustained in the future.
- The family centre that is based in the school provides an excellent resource to engage with, and support, parents and carers of pupils at the school. Parents who have used the centre were full of praise for its work and the way that family support workers have helped them. While some parents expressed

dissatisfaction with the school in Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, those responding to the school's recent survey (a significantly higher proportion compared to the number responding on Parent View) were much more positive. Parents spoken to by inspectors also expressed very positive views about their own and their children's experiences of the school.

- The local authority has given the school good support and school leaders have actively looked outside the school for best practice and initiatives that will help them to improve teaching and raise standards further. Consequently, the school has established good partnerships with other schools and professionals which have benefited staff and helped to accelerate school improvement initiatives.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The work of the governing body was recently reviewed and governors are actively tackling the areas for improvement identified in the review report. In particular, governors are now becoming more actively involved in the school's work and establishing roles for governors where each links into a different area of the school. Some link roles, such as safeguarding, are well established.
 - Governors are effective in carrying out their financial responsibilities. They are particularly good in being strategic and planning for the school's future. They recently reviewed the school's vision and values and involved a wide range of stakeholders, including parents and pupils, in the process. The governing body is increasingly effective in asking searching questions and delving more deeply into the school's performance.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school takes its responsibilities for looking after pupils seriously. Staff are vigilant and well trained to keep pupils safe and to spot any signs of abuse. There is a culture of listening to pupils and taking account of their views. The systems for managing the care of pupils looked after by the local authority are being used as exemplars of best practice by local education authority officers.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The good progress that pupils are now making is down to the increasingly good teaching over the last two years across the school.
- Strong planning, done jointly across each year group, supports teachers to prepare well for lessons. The joint approach to planning has been instrumental in achieving a good level of consistency in the quality of work provided to pupils in different classes. This in turn ensures that most pupils are given work that challenges them and moves them systematically through their learning.
- The joint planning has helped to raise expectations of staff in terms of what pupils can achieve and this is particularly the case in relation to Year 3 where the standard of work expected is now much higher than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Another major element contributing to the good progress across the school is the consistent and regular marking and written feedback teachers provide to pupils. In line with the school's policy, teachers provide questions or comments that focus on key skills and understanding to help pupils see what they need to do to make their work better.
- Pupils respond routinely to feedback, making corrections or refining their work as directed. Over time, this has helped pupils to make tangible improvements to their work.
- The new writing programme is helping teachers to have an even sharper focus on analysing pupils' written work more closely to identify how it can be improved. When pupils redraft their writing following feedback, the improvement in their work is significant. This is most evident in Year 4 where the programme has been established for longer and where it is fully embedded.
- The most able pupils are extended and stretched well most of the time, and particularly so in mathematics and computing. In discussion, a group of the most able pupils felt that they were usually given work that was challenging or difficult in most lessons. If it was too easy for them, they felt that teachers were quick to give them extension work. In some lessons, however, work for the most able is a little bit easy.
- Lower-attaining pupils are given additional help or resources to enable them to meet the demands of the work provided in lessons. However, the work is too hard for them at times and they do not always receive the support they need.
- Pupils with identified special educational needs or disability are supported well in lessons by both the class teacher and by support staff. They also receive helpful one-to-one support or teaching in small groups which enables them to understand the work in class better.

- Well-prepared resources and visual aids help to promote the progress of pupils, especially those learning English as an additional language. Teachers teach pupils technical or subject-specific vocabulary well and make effective use of pair or small group discussions which enables those learning English as an additional language to further develop their English language skills.
- Teachers question pupils well to help them to think through their ideas and to check how well they have grasped key points. Questioning is used well to recap the previous lesson before moving on to new work.
- On occasion, teachers do not move pupils on to doing their own work quickly enough. This means that pupils do not have enough time to complete work fully or to practise the skills they are being taught.
- Reading is taught well. Phonics (letters and their sounds) are used in Year 3 to enable pupils to continue developing their reading from the end of Year 2 by breaking down words into their constituent sounds. Pupils enjoy reading and are reading books at the right level for their needs. The most able pupils are keen to tackle challenging texts.
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy through other subjects in the curriculum. They write reports of experiments in science and about features such as volcanoes in geography.
- Pupils have good opportunities to practise their numeracy in other subjects. For example, they display data in graphs in subjects such as science and geography. In general, teachers make good cross-curricular links between subjects when teaching. This was evident in lessons and in pupils' books.
- Homework is well organised and regular. It focuses appropriately on developing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. In addition, pupils also complete a wide range of work at home in their learning logs. This work builds on the work they are doing in school across a range of subjects. Parents are encouraged to work with their children to support the work in the learning logs. This helps to actively engage parents in their children's learning.
- Adults establish good working relationships with pupils and this means that pupils respect adults and respond quickly to instructions in lessons.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- In lessons, pupils usually focus well on their learning and are good at working with others. In discussions, or when trying to solve a problem, they are good at helping one another to clarify ideas and better understand the work. Discussions are often lively with good participation from pupils.
- Pupils are proud of their school and speak highly of their teachers. Their work is well presented and demonstrates their enthusiasm for learning. Pupils enjoy learning. They are keen to do well and achieve their best. Most are confident learners though a few girls said they found mathematics difficult. This is something the leaders are going to pursue.
- Pupils engage enthusiastically with the good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Displays around the school and discussions indicate that they are developing a good understanding of important values such as democracy and liberty. In their learning logs and cross-curricular writing books, pupils produce interesting writing on why values such as honesty and kindness are important. One pupil had defined liberty as being 'the freedom to do the right thing'. This demonstrates the depth of discussion and reflection that pupils undertake in relation to life's big questions.
- The school's systems for looking after pupils are robust. Despite the large size of the school, pupils are known well by staff, who keep a close eye on those who may need additional support for behaviour or learning.
- Pupils feel safe at school and say they know what to do if they are worried or concerned about anything. The curriculum teaches pupils about how to keep safe and they are developing a good understanding of how to protect themselves from issues such as bullying or being tricked on the internet to give personal details.
- Bullying is not seen as an issue by pupils who acknowledge that friends might sometimes fall out with one another. They are confident that the school will deal with any issues of bullying that arise.
- Pupils respect one another and have a good appreciation for diversity.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They get on well with one another and say that pupils treat each other nicely.
- The school has effective systems for promoting good behaviour and pupils, parents and staff understand these and the school's expectations well.
- The school's systems and approaches to attendance are robust and rigorously applied. Rewards and incentives are used well to encourage good attendance. Where necessary, appropriate sanctions are applied and actions taken where attendance is not good enough. Persistent absence is low as a result.
- Attendance last year was above average but this year is broadly in line with the national average. The school is aware of some of the reasons for this and knows that it needs to continue to work with parents and the local community to maintain good levels of attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' end of key stage 1 assessments indicate that attainment levels are above average. The last inspection report stated that attainment on entry was below average.
- Work seen in books and the school's own assessment information show that attainment on entry varies. Inspectors gathered evidence from pupils' books, spoke to pupils and looked at the progress they make over time. This evidence shows that from generally low starting points pupils achieve well.
- Many pupils are still learning English as an additional language. These pupils are able to meet the requirements at key stage 1 but are not necessarily ready for the greater and more academic English language demands of the key stage 2 curriculum. This includes pupils who are more advanced in their knowledge and understanding of English but are still not writing as fluently and with as wide a range of vocabulary, for example, as they need in order to tackle key stage 2 work.
- The school's leadership is determined that pupils will build on the key stage 1 assessments and sustain above-average standards of work. Therefore, it has set very challenging targets, especially in Year 3. Pupils, and teachers, are rising well to the high expectations set for them and tackling work at more demanding levels than has been the case in the past. Consequently, pupils in Year 3 are making good progress in building on work in key stage 1. They say they feel challenged by the work they are doing.
- Pupils across the school are now making good progress because of the increased demands of all groups. The improvements in progress since the previous inspection mean that older pupils have made up for slower progress and any gaps in their learning from their time in Years 3 and 4. Those who took the end of key stage 2 tests in 2015 had not caught up and results were not good. Nonetheless, a broadly average proportion of pupils attained the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 are working at a higher level than the Year 6 cohort last year. They are on track to achieve higher standards of work and to make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics than has been the case in previous years.
- Work in mathematics is particularly strong with pupils establishing secure skills in using the four rules of number. They routinely learn their tables and are developing good skills in problem-solving. However, pupils find it harder to tackle word problems and explain their reasoning, including the most able pupils. This is a priority for the school to improve in order to raise standards further.
- Reading skills have been improving well as a result of focused work on guided reading, encouraging pupils to read a wider range of texts, and the development and use of the library. Last year's key stage 2 results provide signs that reading was improving because of these initiatives. Lower-attaining pupils are confident readers, though do not always read at home. The most able pupils read well and have good understanding of how to read between the lines.
- Spelling and punctuation are generally good across the school and, as pupils learn new vocabulary, punctuation and grammar, they apply it effectively in written work.
- The level of writing improves well and pupils make significant progress as they move through the school, particularly in terms of establishing a good range and fluency of writing by the time pupils are in Year 6. This is especially the case for the most able pupils. However, some of the issues of fluency in writing and using broader vocabulary more accurately, especially for middle- and lower-attaining pupils, are not being tackled early on enough to produce outstanding progress. The new writing programme is very helpful in improving these aspects of writing where it is used well, but this is not yet embedded across the school.

- Pupils' write effectively in other subjects. Their work includes examples of analytical writing, such as comparing and contrasting different factors, or arguing a case such as for or against another junction on the M1. However, at times, the writing pupils produce is more descriptive than analytical or evaluative. This somewhat limits their progress in developing and practising the language to explain more complex ideas, especially for the most able pupils, to achieve outstanding outcomes.
- Pupils achieve well in a wide range of subjects. They enjoy computing lessons and are getting good at coding. The most able, both boys and girls, are very enthusiastic about taking on bigger challenges when coding and are encouraged to move on ahead of others in the class as soon as they are ready.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their science work. Learning logs in Year 6 show impressive written work and accompanying diagrams on work on the structure and function of the heart for example. Pupils' skills in art and music are developing well and they are gaining good skills in a broad range of sports and physical activities. Writing letters in French is especially challenging work, even in Year 6, but pupils respond with enthusiasm at trying out different vocabulary.
- The school has narrowed and largely closed any gaps in the achievement of different groups of pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress because work is broken down for them well. Additional sessions in small groups or on a one-to-one basis also help these pupils to keep up with others. The most able pupils are also making good progress as they are challenged well most of the time.
- Disadvantaged pupils are doing well in reading, writing and mathematics. Last year's key stage 2 tests showed a much narrower gap in reading between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school. Current assessment information shows that the gaps in learning are now relatively small or non-existent.
- Beginners in English, who join the school, occasionally part way through key stage 2, make rapid progress in learning English because they are well supported. A good induction programme, tailored to individuals, helps new arrivals to settle in quickly and to be prepared to work in mainstream classes. More advanced learners in English now make good strides in extending their English, both spoken and written.

School details

Unique reference number	109560
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10009156

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	599
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stan Boelman
Headteacher	Jo Adams
Telephone number	01582 572100
Website	www.william-austin.com
Email address	admin@williamaustin.juniorluton.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 February 2014

Information about this school

- William Austin is a much larger school in size compared to most primary and junior schools.
- The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest groups being of Bangladeshi or Pakistani heritage. A very high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, though most are fluent or at more advanced stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils who require special educational needs support is higher than the national average. The proportion who have a statement or education, health and care plan is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding (additional government funds to support those who are eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority) is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classes across the school, sampling teaching and learning in each classroom at least once. A number of these visits were carried out jointly with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders and the vice-chair of the governing body and a parent governor.
- The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Members of the inspection team spoke informally to pupils in lessons and around the school as well as holding discussions that are more formal with two groups of pupils from Years 3 to 6.
- Inspectors listened to a group of pupils reading to check how well they were developing their reading skills.
- In carrying out the inspection, the inspection team took account of 27 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View). Members of the team also spoke with parents as they dropped off their children at school and a group of parents in the family centre.
- The inspection team took account of the responses to an Ofsted questionnaire completed by 37 staff.
- Members of the team observed the work of the school. They looked at the school's improvement plan, a range of policies and procedures, documents relating to the work of the governing body and the arrangements for ensuring that pupils are safeguarded. Documentation reviewed included records of assessment information relating to pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour and attendance. The school's website was also examined.

Inspection team

Gulshanbir Kayembe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Patricia Hardy	Ofsted Inspector
Vicky Parsey	Ofsted Inspector

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