

Hamstead Junior School

Hamstead Road, Great Barr, Birmingham B43 5BE

Inspection dates	8–9 June 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

- As a result of effective leadership, management and governance, the school's effectiveness has improved since the last inspection and continues to do so.
- Teaching has improved and is now consistently good. Work set challenges pupils of varying abilities. Pupils across the school achieve well as a result, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Standards of attainment have risen considerably in the last two years and are now much higher than average by the end of Year 6. Pupils are well prepared for secondary school.
- Pupils enjoy learning at Hamstead. The curriculum motivates pupils well.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well, owing to the effective use of the pupil premium funding.
- Pupils are well-behaved, polite, considerate and respectful. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is well developed.
- Attendance has improved. Most pupils now attend regularly.
- Secure relationships between adults and pupils ensure that pupils feel safe at all times. Arrangements to ensure that pupils are kept safe are effective.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not do as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics. Pupils do not use and apply their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills in all their writing.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is not consistently good. The quality of support from teaching assistants varies.
- Leaders' checks on pupils' writing and on the performance of teaching assistants lack rigour.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils achieve as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics, by:
 - improving pupils' use of grammar, punctuation and spelling skills accurately in all their writing
 - improving the rigour with which leaders and managers check pupils' use of grammar, punctuation and spelling skills in their written work.

- Ensure that pupils who have special educational needs or disability make consistently good progress by improving the rigour with which leaders check the performance, skills and subject knowledge of teaching assistants so that they provide consistently effective support to pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Senior leaders and governors demonstrate clear ambition for their school community. They are visible and accessible around school. They work effectively together and with other colleagues in the school, constantly praising and challenging performance as appropriate to ensure that the school continues to improve. Effective action has been taken to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Leaders have ensured that teaching across the school has improved. As a result, standards of attainment have risen considerably and pupils now achieve well.
- The leadership of teaching is good and arrangements to manage the performance of teachers are well embedded. The headteacher and deputy headteacher check the quality of most aspects of teaching well so that it is good across the subjects and in each year group. Good teaching practices evident in classrooms are effectively shared among the staff. Teachers feel well supported to improve their own performance and teaching practice. They value discussions about their own development, knowing that senior leaders will seek out training opportunities to enable them to achieve their goals. As a result of specific training and guidance, for example, each teacher is competent in their roles and responsibilities in leading curriculum subjects.
- Leaders' checks on the performance, skills and subject knowledge of teaching assistants, however, are not as rigorous. The quality of support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability varies as a result.
- Each subject leader has contributed to the development and implementation of the new curriculum at Hamstead. Leaders are determined to ensure that pupils learn through a wide range of subjects. This has resulted in lessons which enrich their learning. For example, each year group learn about music through whole-class instrument tuition. Pupils enjoy learning and show this through their positive attitudes. These attitudes promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- All ethnic and faith groups work and play together harmoniously. Cultural diversity is celebrated and time is made available to learn about tolerance and respect. This helps pupils develop a secure understanding of British values. There is no evidence of discrimination, with leaders always vigilant around school.
- Leaders have implemented their preferred assessment systems well. Teachers make sure they capture information about pupils' current progress and use this information to good effect to identify any pupils who require more support. Governors also use the information to enable them to keep up to date and to challenge school leaders. Although senior and subject leaders carry out regular checks to assess how well pupils are making progress in the subjects of reading, writing and mathematics, their checks of pupils' writing lack rigour. Leaders are yet to ensure that pupils use and apply their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills when writing in other curriculum subjects, such as creative writing and humanities. As a result, achievement in writing is not as good as it is in reading and mathematics.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding well. It ensures that eligible pupils make similar progress to their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of this group of pupils is monitored closely by senior leaders. Governors receive reports every term from the headteacher, which they use to evaluate the progress of this group of pupils.
- Primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding has been used to ensure that the aim of developing teachers' confidence and competence in teaching PE is met. A sports coach has been employed to work alongside teachers in PE lessons. More extra-curricular activities are on offer as a result of the funding, including archery and curling. Pupils appreciate these opportunities.
- The school has welcomed the challenge and support offered by the local authority. Currently, the local authority adviser visits every term. The agendas for these visits focus on specific aspects of school performance, including safeguarding and achievement. As part of the West Bromwich Learning Community, Hamstead staff work with local colleagues to ensure their assessments of pupils' performance are accurate.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body asks challenging questions of the headteacher and senior leaders. Governors know which pupils most need additional support. Such knowledge enables governors to hold the school to account well. The chair of the governing body strikes an effective balance between being very involved in the day-to-day work of the school, and focusing on longer-term improvement.

- Governors have chosen to carry out annual reviews of their own performance. In addition, the chair of the governing body engages in a process which is designed to evaluate her performance. These practices demonstrate the commitment of governors to challenge the school to improve further. Training for individuals and groups of governors is well planned, attended and evaluated.
- Governors are allocated subject responsibilities. They work with relevant subject leaders in order to gain knowledge about the quality of teaching of different subjects. This work, coupled with reports from the headteacher, helps governors understand how well staff are performing. They base their decisions about pay on teachers' performance against their targets.
- Governors are very involved in the school, visiting regularly. As a result, they have gained a thorough knowledge of how the school measures its own performance. This knowledge is reflected in governors' minutes and documents. Governors have worked with senior leaders to develop better ways of presenting achievement information. This enables governors to not only analyse performance for themselves, but also to challenge where they feel improvements could be made.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Up-to-date policies are in place and staff have received appropriate training and information. Consequently, they know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being and prompt action is taken to keep pupils safe. Governors are kept well informed. The chair of the governing body submits written reports to all governors every term. As a result of improved engagement with parents over the past two years, parents now feel more assured that their children are safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved since the last inspection and are now consistently good. As a result, pupils achieve well across the year groups, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers use information about pupils' performance well to set work which challenges pupils of varying abilities. This challenge, coupled with effective questioning, ensures that pupils are made to think deeply about their learning. In many subjects, pupils are expected to tackle problems or present their work in their own preferred ways.
- Since the last inspection, teachers have agreed and implemented a revised marking and feedback policy. This has removed the previous inconsistencies in how they responded to pupils' work, particularly with their written comments. Pupils' books demonstrate consistent application of this policy in each year group and between subjects. Pupils say that teachers' comments in their books help them make better progress.
- Teachers provide good support for those pupils who need to make faster progress in order to reach expected performance levels by the end of the year. Teachers identify what pupils need to do next and use this to design and present activities which enable pupils to develop their understanding securely. Pupils who were previously anxious about taking risks in their learning are now more confident learners. Year 6 pupils, for example, readily offered their ideas to solve mathematical problems.
- Teachers set homework that encourages pupils to think and present their work in imaginative ways. Clear tasks are assigned and pupils are left to present their understanding in any way they choose. For example, one group of pupils decided to use digital media to present their cake-selling business enterprise. They used their English and mathematical skills well to persuade others to purchase their cakes and to calculate profits. Pupils complete homework regularly, showing creativity in their thinking.
- Strong, trusting relationships are evident between pupils and teachers. This helps pupils when work is very challenging as they feel secure sharing their ideas with their teachers. These relationships contribute to the pupils' enjoyment of learning.
- Reading is taught effectively. In recent years the school has invested in books and facilities to improve pupils' interest and progress in reading. Examples include a refurbished library and new reading books. Pupils understand why books are grouped according to levels of difficulty and are keen to work through them. Pupils are keen to talk about their reading and are making good progress.
- The teaching of mathematics is consistently strong in each year group. Teachers understand the importance of supporting pupils to develop secure reasoning and problem-solving skills. They ensure that sufficient time is given to pupils to enable them to refine their understanding. For example, in a Year 5 perimeter lesson, before moving on to new concepts, pupils had to use skills learned in the previous lesson to tackle unfamiliar problems. Furthermore, teachers use their secure subject knowledge to ask questions of pupils which expect them to articulate their understanding clearly using correct mathematical vocabulary.

- The teaching of writing has improved over the past two years. Pupils now have more time to write. Teachers ensure that pupils understand and can use specific grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. However, currently, pupils do not apply these skills to their writing in other subjects consistently. This means that their progress in writing is not as good as it could be.
- The quality of support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is variable. Some teaching assistants use their secure subject knowledge effectively to ask pupils to explain their thinking and to then pose problems which check out pupils' understanding. Not all teaching assistants do this, however. Some do not question pupils as well as they might.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Through displays of pupils' work, the school shows how it encourages pupils to show tolerance and respect for others. Pupils talk about what this means for them. They demonstrate such values in their day-to-day work and play. This leads to pupils being well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The curriculum encourages pupils to take risks in their learning. They understand that making mistakes can be valuable in helping them develop a better understanding of different topics. Pupils now readily offer their ideas about how problems could be tackled.
- Pupils work well together. They are keen to share their ideas and consider the best ways to work on the tasks presented. Examples were seen in mathematics lessons where pupils jotted their calculations on whiteboards before discussing these with their partners. Such collaborative learning also benefits pupils' understanding of different cultures and faiths. Equality is well promoted at Hamstead. There is no evidence of discrimination.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe around school and when using the internet. Leaders and governors ensure that all staff understand and follow relevant safeguarding policies and guidance, including those related to child protection. Through surveys, parents express confidence that the school is effective in keeping their children safe.
- Bullying and racist incidents are rare. If incidents do occur, pupils are confident that staff deal with them quickly and effectively. Leaders' reports to governors show that any incidents are followed through to a satisfactory conclusion. Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and how it differs from poor behaviour.
- Pupils display positive attitudes in their interactions with each other. They are keen to listen to what others have to say, reflecting on this in developing their own views and opinions. These attitudes contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils understand behaviour systems, which include how sanctions and rewards are used. This helps them conduct themselves well around school. They know that good behaviour will be rewarded. Pupils show good manners and are courteous to pupils and adults alike.
- The indoor and outdoor environments are well presented and maintained. Pupils are proud of their work. They are keen to talk about their model making, including Othello masks and interpretations of scenes from 'Stig of the dump'. Pupils move around the school carefully showing appreciation for such work.
- Pupils behave well at breaktimes. This is owing to effective supervision. Staff on duty know that pupils appreciate their engagement in play activities. A supervisor was observed helping a group of pupils to develop games and show their creativity using a large parachute, discussing other possibilities and trying them out.
- Most pupils have good attendance. The headteacher, family support worker and school staff work well with pupils, families and outside agencies to improve the attendance of individuals. As a result of their successful actions, pupils with higher absence rates have improved their attendance. Pupils appreciate how the school recognises good attendance, such as celebrations in assemblies.
- Occasionally in lessons, some pupils become frustrated. This is because their learning is disrupted by the behaviour of a few other pupils, for example fiddling with equipment on tables. Once identified, this behaviour is dealt with by staff effectively.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Since the last inspection, pupils' outcomes have improved. Pupils currently make good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 have risen considerably in the last two years and are now much higher than average in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their transfer to secondary education.
- Achievement in reading is good and is continuing to improve. In Year 6 in 2015, almost all pupils made at least the expected rate of progress from their previous starting points. School data and inspection evidence shows that the proportion of pupils currently making more than the expected rate of progress has now increased. Pupils enjoy reading suitably challenging books. They are keen to change them regularly.
- Standards in writing have improved greatly since the last inspection and in Year 6 in 2015 were much higher than average. The proportion of pupils making more than the expected rate of progress was also higher than average. However, currently across the school, achievement in writing, while still good, is not as good as in reading and mathematics. Pupils do not apply and embed their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills in all their written work. This is restricting the ability of current pupils to reach the higher levels of attainment in writing.
- Attainment in mathematics is above average. Inspection evidence and school achievement information show that pupils continue to make strong progress. Teachers question pupils effectively then set tasks, which challenge them at an appropriate level. Teachers' written comments challenge pupils to show their reasoning, for example, to articulate why a particular number cannot be part of a sequence of numbers.
- Senior leaders and governors check carefully to ensure that most groups of pupils achieve well. This includes pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language. Last year, Indian pupils achieved particularly well, making rapid progress in their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils have made good progress and attained well over recent years. In Year 6 in 2015, their attainment was similar to that of their classmates and to other pupils nationally. Currently, this group of pupils continue to make good progress in each year group and across subjects.
- As a result of more effective teaching, lower-attaining pupils are making faster progress so that they catch up with their classmates. More are now on track to attain end of year expectations.
- Most-able pupils do well, particularly in reading and mathematics. In reading, pupils read technically difficult books, which enable them to use higher level skills, such as inference. In mathematics, pupils use their secure reasoning skills to decide how to tackle unfamiliar problems and then check that their answers are reasonable. In Year 6 in 2015, a much higher than average proportion of pupils reached the higher levels of attainment.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability do not make consistently good progress. While some do well, others make less progress than they are capable of. The quality of support for these pupils is variable. Pupils are not always encouraged by teaching assistants to explain their thinking clearly. Staff are sometimes, therefore, unclear about what pupils know and can do and what they need to learn next.

School details

Unique reference number	103895
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10012389

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	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynn Howard
Headteacher	Tim Bowen
Telephone number	0121 357 1557
Website	www.hamsteadjuniorschool.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@hamstead-jun.sandwell.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 May 2014

Information about this school

- Hamstead Junior is similar to an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is rising and is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is rising and is well above average.
- Approximately one third of the pupils are White British, with Indian pupils making up the largest other group.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is rising and is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 lessons, two of which were observed jointly with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the chair of the governing body and other governors, staff and a local authority adviser.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading and listened to them read.
- Inspectors examined work in pupils' books and observed an assembly.
- The school's child protection and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documentation written to support school improvement.
- Inspectors took account of the 15 replies to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire. Inspectors took account of parental and pupil surveys conducted by the school and also spoke with parents.

Inspection team

Jeremy Bird, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Bailie	Ofsted Inspector

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