

# Courthouse Junior School

Blenheim Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 5HE

## Inspection dates

14–15 March 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that teaching is consistently good. They do not give enough emphasis to the progress that pupils make when checking on teaching.
- As a result of the variable quality of teaching, pupils' progress is not consistently strong, particularly in writing.
- The school's assessment systems do not give a clear picture of pupils' achievement. As a result, teachers' expectations of pupils' progress are sometimes lowered.
- Low-attaining pupils are not challenged enough to improve their reading skills. They have too few opportunities to show how well they can write without extra help.
- Work planned for the most able pupils in mathematics is sometimes too easy.
- Governors are not sufficiently aware of how quickly pupils are making progress compared with the national picture.
- Leaders do not accurately evaluate how well the pupil premium funds are used. Provision for disadvantaged pupils is not helping them to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- Leaders' improvement plans address the appropriate issues but do not include clear, measurable targets. As a result, there is not enough urgency to bring about the necessary changes.
- Extra help planned for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not checked rigorously enough. Some additional support has had little impact.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic about school.
- Teachers have developed strong relationships with their pupils. The headteacher has developed a strong team spirit among staff.
- The recently introduced training programme is helping to develop the skills of leaders, teachers and teaching assistants.
- Governors have recently taken decisive action to improve leadership.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff show great concern for the well-being of pupils.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are considerate of others and are developing into responsible young citizens.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance by ensuring that:
  - the progress of pupils is accurately measured and shared with governors
  - assessment information is analysed clearly so that it can be used for effective planning
  - there are clear, measurable and challenging success criteria for planned actions to improve the school's performance
  - best use is made of the pupil premium funding to help disadvantaged pupils to catch up.
- Raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
  - the quality of pupils' writing improves quickly and that pupils use their developing writing skills in other subjects
  - the effectiveness of extra support planned for pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, is checked closely so that those pupils make at least good progress
  - the most able pupils in all years, including those who are disadvantaged, are provided with learning activities that are appropriately challenging
  - pupils have more opportunities to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good by ensuring that:
  - teachers are held accountable for the progress made by the pupils that they are responsible for, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
  - teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching and learning is strong enough to enable pupils to make consistently good progress, particularly in writing.
- The system for managing teachers' performance is not robust. Senior leaders are not closely involved in checking the quality of class teachers' work. In addition, not enough emphasis is given to the progress that pupils make when evaluating the effectiveness of teaching. As a consequence, teachers are not sufficiently challenged, nor are their expectations high enough.
- Leaders do not rigorously check how effectively the pupil premium is being used to help disadvantaged pupils make better progress in English and mathematics. Leaders do not pay enough attention to how quickly disadvantaged pupils are catching up with others.
- The leadership of the provision to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is not strong enough. Although support for pupils' social and emotional needs is effective, help for their academic progress is too variable. Too little attention is paid to the impact of extra support and the work of teaching assistants. There are examples where support strategies are not modified, despite them bringing about little improvement.
- Decisive steps are now being taken to secure better outcomes for pupils. The leadership team has been restructured this year. Several key members of the new leadership team are relatively inexperienced. However, training programmes and advice from an external consultant, brokered through the local authority, are providing effective support.
- Leaders have tackled some of the weaker aspects of teaching. They provide teachers and teaching assistants with good opportunities for additional appropriate training to develop their skills. Core subject leaders, though new to post, know the main strengths and weaknesses in their subject areas. They are enthusiastic, well organised and model teaching well.
- The headteacher has helped to develop a strong team spirit within the school. Staff morale is high and adds to the friendly and welcoming atmosphere that the school enjoys.
- The school offers a broad range of subjects with a suitable emphasis on English and mathematics. Physical education and music are particularly prominent. The primary sports funding is used well to improve teachers' coaching skills and to promote greater participation in sport. More pupils now go to sports clubs and there are more opportunities for competitive events. Pupils enjoy a range of musical activities, including the chance to play musical instruments. The school makes sure that any pupils who are disadvantaged can learn a musical instrument or join a club if they want to. The curriculum is enhanced through a wide range of visits and visitors. Pupils enjoy and can describe trips, for example to the zoo, local museums and cinema.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development actively. For example, pupils are able to talk about getting along well with others, caring for the

environment and raising money for less fortunate people around the world. In addition, they can explain British values and how these are linked to school life. Pupils are well prepared to become responsible citizens.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have recently taken effective steps to improve the leadership of the school. After recognising the gaps in their own skill set, governors strengthened the governing body by recruiting members with relevant expertise. They have organised an effective training programme for the governing body.
- In most areas, governors challenge leaders and hold them to account. They are informed well through reports from the headteacher and subject leaders and their own frequent and focused visits. Governors receive copious amounts of assessment information from leaders and teachers. However, the information presented does not show clearly where pupils are not making enough progress compared with national figures.
- Governors understand their roles and responsibilities. They are diligent and committed to driving the school forward. The training they have organised for school leaders, for example, on time management, managing change, and teamwork, is helping the newly established senior leadership team to work more effectively together and bring about the necessary changes.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture. Staff are vigilant about possible risks on site or on visits. Checks on adults employed at the school and visitors are rigorous. Processes for reporting and recording concerns about pupils are well known and secure. Staff are well trained in the school systems to keep pupils safe, including from the influence of extremist views. Most staff are trained in delivering first aid.
- The headteacher and the two other designated safeguarding leads are knowledgeable and passionate about their roles. They know their contacts in social services well and are tenacious in following up concerns to make sure pupils at risk get the right support.

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

## **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching varies too much across the school.
- Too often, work set for pupils in mathematics is not challenging enough, particularly for the most able pupils. Sometimes pupils spend too long on exercises that they have already mastered. In addition, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop reasoning skills, although for pupils in Year 6 this is improving.
- Some teachers do not challenge pupils' errors in spelling key words in their English writing tasks and when writing in other subjects. Untidy handwriting detracts from the quality of some pupils' work.

- Teaching assistants are skilled and have recent relevant training, for example in supporting pupils who have autistic spectrum conditions. Teaching assistants liaise well with teachers, but sometimes their deployment is not well planned. On occasions, teaching assistants have too little to do in lessons and so are less effective in helping identified pupils.
- Teachers follow the school's marking policy closely. They generally indicate what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve, or offer extension questions. Pupils understand the school's feedback system and most respond positively to their teachers' comments. Pupils say that teachers' guidance helps them to improve.
- Teachers know their pupils well. Through a variety of assessments, teachers gain a good understanding of pupils' strengths and gaps in their knowledge. Moderation activities with the local authority and other schools are helping teachers to evaluate pupils' work more accurately.
- Senior leaders, together with subject and year leaders are beginning to ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching through training and close monitoring.
- Provision in English is improving. For example, reading texts have been updated and are more challenging and appealing.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop self-confidence in a school where they are valued and cared for well. They are happy to share their opinions and talk about their work. Through assemblies and lessons, pupils develop strong moral values and concern for others less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils are respectful and courteous to others, including visitors. Pupils say everyone should be treated equally, no matter what their background is.
- Older pupils are eager to shoulder some of the wide range of extra responsibilities available at school, such as peer mediators, prefects and 'buddies'. Pupils were seen collecting and accurately recording dinner tokens in the dining hall. Peer mediators, who help to sort out minor disagreements, are well respected by their peers.
- Pupils feel safe and secure at school. They are learning how to keep themselves healthy and safe. For example, they know how to stay safe online and how to make healthy eating choices. The school's focus on pupils' mental, social and emotional health contributes strongly to their well-being.
- Pupils know about the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, and what to do if they see or experience bullying. Pupils reported that there was little bullying in school and were confident that their teachers would sort out any incidents quickly.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils know the school rules and the behaviour expected of them. They conduct themselves well as they move around the school. In the classroom, they respond to instructions and settle down to work promptly. Pupils report that behaviour in lessons is usually good, though occasionally some pupils can fidget and talk out of turn if the lesson is boring.
- Pupils show respect for their environment. They look after the school site and there is little litter.
- Attendance has been maintained above the average for primary schools. Pupils like their teachers and enjoy coming to school. The school follows up any absences closely to ensure pupils' safety. This year the attendance rate of disadvantaged pupils, a concern last year, has improved and is now similar to that of their schoolmates.
- The number of incidents of poor behaviour is small and reducing. Although patterns of misbehaviour have not been analysed sharply enough in the past, the effectiveness of behaviour management is closely evaluated now.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **Requires improvement**

- Written work seen in pupils' books and speaking to them about their work shows the progress that pupils are making across the school is variable and not consistently good. Progress is weakest in writing. Assessment information provided by the school, focusing on the proportions of pupils likely to reach age-related expectations, does not give a clear measure of their progress.
- In 2016, pupils made broadly average progress in reading and mathematics, but pupils with low starting points did less well in mathematics. In writing, pupils made less than average progress overall.
- Also in 2016, disadvantaged pupils made less progress than others did nationally in writing and mathematics. The school was in the lowest 10% of schools by this measure in writing, and no disadvantaged pupil reached the higher standard in writing. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also made slower than expected progress from their starting points in writing and mathematics.
- Like their peers, current disadvantaged pupils are making variable progress and the school cannot be confident they are catching up with others nationally.
- Pupils have few opportunities to develop their skills in writing when studying other subjects, such as science and geography. Less able pupils and some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not given enough opportunities to show how well they can write when not supported. Therefore, teachers have an overgenerous view of these pupils' standards.
- Pupils enjoy reading and have good opportunities to read by themselves during the school day. Pupils reported that they often read at home as well as in school. Stronger readers in Year 3 read confidently and with feeling, making good use of punctuation for expression. Weak readers have not developed secure phonics strategies to decode unfamiliar words. In some support activities, weak readers do not get enough individual attention to develop their reading skills quickly.

- Currently, more pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics than last year at the same point. Pupils' performance is strongest in reading.

## School details

Unique reference number	109819
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10024704

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Tarbit
Headteacher	Gerry Heynes
Telephone number	01628 626958
Website	<a href="http://www.courthousejunior.co.uk">www.courthousejunior.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:courthouse@rbwm.org.uk">courthouse@rbwm.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	2—3 October 2012

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary school. There are three classes in each of the four year groups, from Years 3 to 6. Most pupils are of White British origin. The rest are from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan is around the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor targets that set the minimum expectations for pupils in primary school.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with school staff, including the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff in charge of aspects of the school's work. An inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors met two groups of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and an external adviser brokered by the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out observations of learning, some of which were undertaken with the headteacher. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work in books across all year groups and most subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with two groups of pupils during formal meetings and informally with pupils during lessons and breaktimes.
- A range of documentation was considered including the school development plan, self-evaluation report, records of monitoring of teaching and learning and information about pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour. Inspectors scrutinised records concerning safeguarding and toured the school site.
- Inspectors analysed the 81 responses and 54 written comments submitted to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, during the inspection. They also considered the 29 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 104 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

James McVeigh, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nik Cook	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Garlick	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Morgan	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Metcalfe	Ofsted Inspector

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