

# Breachwood Green Junior Mixed and Infant School

Oxford Road, Breachwood Green, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 8NP

## Inspection dates

1–2 February 2018

<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>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is improving, but is below average.
- Governors' limited knowledge and understanding of information about the school and information about pupils' progress limits their ability to challenge leaders and consequentially restricts their effectiveness.
- Subject leaders do not have a clear picture of attainment in their subject areas.
- Time in classrooms is not always used effectively. As a result, the pace of learning, particularly in writing, continues to be slow.
- Teaching is not sufficiently matched to pupils' needs. In some lessons the work set lacks challenge or is too difficult.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is very aware of the school's weaknesses and the need for rapid improvement. The school's new development plan specifically addresses these weaknesses.
- The school's pupils, staff and parents welcome the recent changes within the school and are overwhelmingly positive about the direction that the school is taking.
- Behaviour throughout the school is good. Learning time is rarely disrupted.
- Strong phonics teaching enables pupils to develop good early reading and literacy skills.
- Effective leadership in the early years ensures that children achieve well and have a good start to their learning.
- The school is maintained as a safe environment, where safeguarding practices are strong and pupils are well looked after.

## Full report

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

- Continue to accelerate pupils' progress and further raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - rigorously monitoring and evaluating the impact of newly introduced teaching strategies
  - ensuring that lessons are pitched at the right level for all, and particularly the most able
  - checking that time is well used in lessons
  - insisting on high-quality presentation in all pupils' work.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - clarifying the responsibilities of middle leaders and fully developing the role of subject leader
  - reviewing assessment systems so that school leaders may more easily monitor pupils' performance.
- An external review of governance 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

- The school, in its previous inspection, was guided to develop subject leadership so that curriculum specialists could accurately measure progress and take appropriate action to raise achievement. This has not been accomplished. Until recently, subject leaders who are keen and willing have been insufficiently involved in the leadership of their subjects. As a result, assessment information is now used by the headteacher to challenge teachers, but is not yet routinely used by subject leaders to check progress in their subject.
- Leaders have put in place a considerable number of changes to address pupils' historic underachievement. Although some positive impact from these changes is evident, it remains too soon to be able to measure real improvements. This is because the school's assessment procedures are not yet sufficiently refined to allow leaders and teachers to evaluate fully the impact of the newly introduced strategies.
- The headteacher has accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses within the school and has produced an effective development plan. The plan rightly focuses on raising pupils' attainment and achievement. The headteacher recognises the need for all leaders to closely monitor the implementation of the plan to ensure its effectiveness. Early indications are that the actions are beginning to have the intended impact. For example, in mathematics, pupils are developing their 'applying' and 'reasoning' skills more widely.
- Parents value the recent workshops and improved communication. They have been invited into school and guided on how to support their children's learning. New reading record books are used to record progress at home and pupils read regularly.
- Performance management is now used more effectively to hold teachers to account. The headteacher has communicated her expectations by setting high, yet achievable, pupil progress targets. The headteacher's skill at coaching and motivating staff means that the school's teachers are unanimously proud of their school and believe it to be improving rapidly.
- The introduction of 'Breachwood's Got Values' has led to an invigorated approach to securing a school-wide framework for the teaching of spiritual, moral, social and cultural values. In an assembly, pupils were asked to define the concept 'citizenship' and were able to talk about the importance of following rules. Teachers were asked to nominate pupils who, throughout the week, had been exemplifying this value. This is a good example of how the school's leadership team encourages positive approaches to living and working together as well as reinforcing expectations of good behaviour and the promotion of British values.
- The school has a small proportion of disadvantaged pupils. These pupils are well supported. Leaders recognise the importance of pastoral care in overcoming any barriers to learning. The headteacher has deployed teaching assistants with specific roles and funded training in restorative approaches. She has ensured access to additional provision such as booster and breakfast clubs. This means that children will have had the opportunity to complete their homework and enjoy a positive start to the school day.

- The school has a strong reputation for the promotion of physical activity and healthy lifestyles. This is justified. PE and sport premium funding is well spent on providing sustainable resources and training, as well as additional opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide variety of clubs and enrichment activities. However, leaders do not evaluate the impact of this provision and so cannot accurately identify how it could be improved.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported appropriately by a knowledgeable and increasingly well-trained team. Parent views, expressed in review meetings, of this provision are positive. They are satisfied that their children's uniqueness is recognised and the care and support provided by the school is matched to their needs.
- The impact of the new headteacher on the school is clear and has been praised by all school stakeholders. She has built a new and effective senior leadership team that has the capacity to address the school's legacy issues and develop the school rapidly. For example, they have already had considerable impact in ensuring good-quality phonics teaching.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are not sufficiently aware of the poor progress of pupils in key stage 2. Governors have been too readily accepting of the reasons for poor outcomes offered by the school's leadership team and the local authority. This means that school performance is not monitored sufficiently carefully and governors fail to hold leaders to account properly. This is beginning to change.
- Governors failed to ensure that actions detailed in the school's previous inspection report were carried out with rigour. Consequently the necessary improvements were not made.
- Governors do not check teachers' effectiveness closely enough. They do not monitor teachers' pay progression and the efficacy of performance management arrangements well. This is beginning to improve.
- Governors are very supportive of the new headteacher and agree that she is moving the school in the right direction. They fully understand the difficulties of recruitment to a small school and see her appointment as 'a breath of fresh air'.
- Governors, through monitoring, ensure that the measures leaders take to safeguard pupils are effective.
- Previously, the local authority, aware of weaknesses, had urged the governing body to carry out a review of its practices. The governing body did not do this.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school is kept as a safe and secure environment. The necessary checks are made on all staff and volunteers who work with the school's pupils. Safer recruitment practices are appropriate and the single central record is properly maintained.

- Leaders have ensured that appropriate training and procedures are in place to keep pupils safe. Records are suitably detailed and up to date. The school's staff know what to do when child protection concerns are raised. Leaders work closely with parents and carers and other agencies, such as the local family support team, to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Bullying and discriminatory behaviour are very rare. Through direct teaching and workshops, both pupils and parents have a sound knowledge of online safety.

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

### **Requires improvement**

- Teaching in the school is still not sufficiently effective. Leaders' recent actions have not yet secured the rapid improvements needed in pupils' performance. Teachers are not yet sufficiently clear about the specific actions needed to improve pupils' progress. Curriculum time is not always well used and there is an underdeveloped assessment system. These factors impede the progress of pupils.
- The pace of learning is sometimes slow. Weak teaching sometimes hinders the progress that pupils make. For example, in a sequence of writing lessons pupils were spending more time than was necessary in planning and consequently had less time available to accomplish the task.
- The level of challenge provided is not always appropriate for pupils. For example, in a mathematics lesson the work was set at a level that was too easy for some, who rapidly completed the work. These pupils were not being extended sufficiently. In that same lesson other pupils struggled with the level of difficulty and did not receive the support needed to enable them to learn effectively.
- Pupils are beginning to take greater pride in their work. This is because teaching staff have agreed new, higher standards for presentation. However, these are not being implemented with consistency across all classes and subjects.
- Pupils are developing genuine pleasure in reading books. In key stage 2, this is enhanced by pupils reading challenging texts. In one group seen by the inspector, for example, key stage 2 readers all read at an age-appropriate level and with accuracy. They were able to self-correct and exhibited a range of reading strategies and skills. All enjoyed talking about their chosen texts and demonstrated good comprehension. However, pupils in key stage 1 are not receiving sufficient challenge with their choice of reading scheme books.
- Leaders have recently introduced a new scheme of work for mathematics that promotes the development of reasoning and mastery. This is in contrast to the previous scheme that focused on learning computation skills with little opportunity for application. As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics is improving. Additionally, apparatus to assist pupils' learning in mathematics is used more frequently than previously and supports pupils of different abilities.
- Other recent improvements to teaching and learning include pupils being given explicit next steps in acquiring grammar. In addition, pupils now have more opportunities to act on their teachers' advice.

- In all classrooms the environment is calm and purposeful. Pupils are rarely distracted from their learning. They are well aware of the increased expectations of them.
- In a recent, well-led art event, the whole school explored works by Van Gogh. This was wholeheartedly supported by staff. Pupils told the inspector that they particularly enjoyed these lessons. The subject leader believes that this was a positive start in developing a key skills scheme to run through the school. There are many examples around the school of artworks developed from this day that feature careful brushwork and sketching techniques.
- Teaching in science is a strength, it is planned in themes to ensure full coverage and delivered in weekly lessons across the school. There is a consistency in approach that means that all pupils have opportunities to observe and record, write independently and make observational drawings and diagrams. Pupils' work in books indicates that they make good progress in this subject. By the end of Year 6 pupils can confidently use scientific language, plan and execute fair tests, record their investigations and draw conclusions.
- Phonics teaching has improved. Regular checking of how well pupils are doing has allowed teachers to identify gaps in pupils' learning and put appropriate support in place. In phonics, teachers are clear about what pupils are able to do and what they need to do next. As a result, teaching enables pupils to make better progress in reading than in other areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers set homework in line with the school's homework policy. Pupils believe that the amount they get is just about right. They say that it builds confidence and prepares them for tests. Those who have difficulty are given extra help in booster sessions or in the after-school homework club, enabling them to keep up with other pupils.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy school. They uphold the school's values and are good ambassadors. They are keen to share their understanding of these values with visitors, particularly perseverance, tolerance, teamwork and respect.
- Pupils respond well to their teachers, who they believe are friendly and approachable. They enjoy their work and say that they almost always do their best.
- The school is a very active place to be. Because leaders have promoted sports and physical activity, pupils are knowledgeable about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning are consistently strong. They are respectful to their teachers and those that support their learning. They readily volunteer for additional work and responsibility. For example, the library is currently being reorganised by a

group of Year 6 pupils and dozens of pupils asked to be chosen to write a book review for the next school newsletter.

- Bullying in the school is rare and pupils are confident that teachers would be effective in resolving it if it did happen. An overwhelming majority of pupils believe that there is an adult within the school whom they can go to for help and advice.
- Attendance is considerably better than the national average, particularly so for disadvantaged pupils. Children whose health needs make it difficult to secure good attendance are well supported to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by missing school.
- Throughout the inspection the pupils were helpful, polite and friendly. Their enjoyment of school was evident.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- From 2015 to 2017 pupils' progress by the end of key stage 2 for reading, writing and mathematics was weak. In 2017 the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard for reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average. Leaders acknowledge that expectations have not been high enough.
- The progress of the most-able pupils in the current Year 6 is not strong enough because, until recently, leaders and teachers were not sufficiently aware of the requirements of working at greater depth. As a result, the most able pupils in the current Year 6 need to catch up.
- Key stage 2 results in 2016 and 2017 show that the small number of disadvantaged pupils were not prioritised. As a result, progress and attainment for this group of pupils was weak. The headteacher's new pupil premium strategy is aimed at tackling this. The majority of disadvantaged pupils are currently achieving at a typical level for pupils of their age. Provision is being reviewed for those who are not yet doing so.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 has been consistently in line with the national average at both the expected and higher levels.
- Key stage 2 pupils are now making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This reflects leaders' actions to ensure higher standards this year. The evidence in pupils' workbooks suggests that the majority of pupils are beginning to catch up because recently effective teaching is ensuring that standards are rising.
- The review of phonics teaching has resulted in an acceleration of pupils' progress in developing early reading and literacy skills.
- Pupils now have the opportunity to apply their English and mathematics skills more thoroughly across the curriculum. Writing targets in the school's development plan require teachers to ensure that pupils write at length across a variety of subject areas. This is working, and pupils' topic work demonstrates the extended writing they now do. Mathematics is being applied in science lessons. Key stage 1 pupils are measuring the growth of plants and in key stage 2 pupils are required to use their statistical skills to interpret data such as determining correlations and reading graphs.
- Work in English books demonstrates that progress is starting to be made at an

accelerated pace. The presentation and content of pupils' work has improved considerably. Year 6 pupils are able to use a range of punctuation tools accurately, including speech marks and ellipses. The school is taking a more cohesive approach to how it teaches spelling. As a result, pupils across the school are becoming more confident writers.

- In mathematics, the school is adopting an approach that better develops reasoning skills. Pupils are now able to use a range of mental strategies in solving problems and are more confident in checking their understanding than pupils were in the past. Work in books shows good progress and a growing excitement in mathematics since the start of the academic year.
- The additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used well. There is clear evidence that these pupils are now making good progress. They have specific learning targets and are well supported in achieving these.
- The school's curriculum is broad and offers a wide range of activities and experiences. Pupils are inspired to do well and generally they make good progress, particularly when the curriculum is carefully planned and systematically taught, for example in science.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- Leadership and management in the early years is good. Children in the early years enjoy their learning and make good progress.
- The staff within the school's Reception class work well together. They plan, share and moderate their observations. They have, as a result, developed an accurate understanding of children's learning.
- Teachers' expectations are high. As a result, several children are now writing independently and observing the basic rules of punctuation. Children understand the personalised information that their teachers give them on how to improve their work. For example, one boy commented that he knew he had to use a capital letter after a full stop as it was one of his next steps targets. All children benefit from this supportive, tailored approach.
- Children in the setting are kind to each other and work together considerately. For example, children were observed to collaborate well in building a space rocket out of junk materials and enjoyed chanting a countdown together.
- Additional adults are used well and children are motivated to learn. The setting is attractive, well designed and well equipped. The resources are varied and suitable for the age range, fit for purpose and accessible. Children have the freedom to investigate and explore independently
- Teachers are keen to ensure that when pupils leave the Reception class they are ready for the next phase of primary school. They fully brief the Year 1 teacher on children's progress. Their assessments are accurate and have been subject to rigorous checking.
- Children do well in the early years. This is because careful assessment allows teachers to judge the rate of learning accurately and structure teaching accordingly. The rate of learning in the foundation stage is good. Children arrive at school with broadly typical



starting points and leave the Reception class with above-average outcomes. Most pupils achieved a good level of development in 2017.

## School details

Unique reference number	117119
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10041792

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elisabeth Greet
Headteacher	Kirsty Badham
Telephone number	01438 833115
Website	<a href="http://www.breachwoodgreen.herts.sch.uk">www.breachwoodgreen.herts.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@breachwoodgreen.herts.sch.uk">head@breachwoodgreen.herts.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	1–2 May 2014

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is lower than for most primary schools nationally.
- The percentage of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- The majority of the school's pupils are white British. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background is low.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out by one Ofsted inspector. The inspector looked at teaching in all classes. He was joined by the headteacher for the majority of these observations.
- Pupils were also observed during assembly, playtimes and at lunch.
- Meetings were held with five governors and the school council. The inspector also carried out a phone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and staff members to discuss a wide range of school activities.
- The inspector reviewed a range of the school's documents, including those relating to development planning, assessment, SEN, attendance and safeguarding information.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their learning and listened to readers from key stages 1 and 2. He checked learning in a range of pupils' books from across the school.
- Fifty-seven responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered, as well as 70 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey and 11 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

James Richards, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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