

# Whitstable Junior School

Oxford Street, Whitstable, CT5 1DB

**Inspection dates** 23–24 April 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher leads and manages the school well. She is ably supported by other leaders and governors. Together, they have ensured that the school has improved quickly since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement because of their effective checking of pupils' progress and of teaching.
- The quality of teaching is now good. Pupils achieve well and attainment has risen to above-average levels overall.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together well to ensure that pupils enjoy their work and make good progress, especially in English and mathematics.
- Staff have very effective working relationships with the pupils and offer them lots of praise and encouragement that motivate them to do well.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve as well as the others.
- Pupils' good behaviour enables them to work and play together well. They have good attitudes towards learning and are polite and courteous.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They know how to avoid dangers outside school. This is preparing them well for life beyond school.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the work of the school. They visit regularly and closely check its work. They provide effective support and are thorough in holding other leaders to account.
- Most parents are positive about the school, especially the way that it cares for their children through the 'well-being' team.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always produce the high quality of work seen in English and mathematics in other subjects.
- In some classes, not enough time is allocated to the teaching of subjects such as science, history and art for skills and knowledge to develop more quickly.
- There are some occasions when teachers provide work for pupils that is too difficult or too easy for them. This slows down their learning.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 15 lessons, nine of which were observed jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made other, short visits to lessons.
- Discussions were held with pupils, staff, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 46 parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also talked to parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work, heard pupils read and looked at a number of documents, including: the school’s own information about pupils’ learning and progress; planning and monitoring documents; the school development plan; records relating to behaviour and attendance; safeguarding information; and health and safety documentation.
- The inspectors analysed 27 questionnaire responses from staff.

## Inspection team

Mike Capper, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Alison Botarelli

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is in line with the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics so that it is consistently good by ensuring that enough time is allowed for them to be studied in sufficient detail.
- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by ensuring that work is never too difficult or too easy for pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Good leadership from the headteacher and her senior team has secured good improvement in school effectiveness since the previous inspection. They have established a culture of high expectations of teaching, pupils' achievement and their behaviour. The local authority has given good support over the last two years to ensure that the needed improvements have been secured.
- Leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching. They set teachers targets for improvement and give them good support, guidance and training for this to be achieved. The training of staff has helped to improve skills. For example, extensive training for all staff, including teaching assistants, ensured that when a new system for teaching phonics (learning about letters and the sounds that link to them) was introduced it was immediately taught equally well across the school.
- Middle leaders, such as those in charge of subjects, have greatly strengthened their roles in improving provision since the previous inspection. Leadership is particularly strong in English and mathematics and in managing support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Leaders in these areas are having a significant impact on securing improvement and tackling weaknesses. One example is how leaders responded very quickly to tackle a slight dip in attainment in reading in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2014. They evaluated teaching and made the necessary adjustments to get pupils back on track.
- The range of subjects taught effectively promotes pupils' good progress in English and mathematics. However, in some classes, a consequence of the strong focus on improving basic literacy and numeracy skills has been that too little time is allowed for the teaching of other subjects. As a result, the quality of pupils' work in subjects such as history, art and science is not consistently strong. Leaders have identified this. As part of the way they are carrying out the new National Curriculum they are already reviewing planning to ensure that provision is equally strong in all subjects.
- Work both in and out of lessons successfully supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Well-planned enrichment activities through clubs and visits help pupils develop as learners and widen their understanding of the world.
- Leaders successfully promote values such as kindness, respect and tolerance. Through their dealings with each other, staff, pupils and parents, they show their strong commitment to these values. They also ensure that the school promotes equality of opportunity, fosters good relations and tackles discrimination. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain through community activities such as 'Whitstable in Bloom' and by taking part in school elections which are helping them to get a very good understanding of modern democracy.
- The school uses the primary physical education and sport premium well. Working alongside specialist sports coaches has widened teachers' expertise in physical education. This funding has also increased opportunities for pupils to take part in sports activities. Consequently, in the last year, participation rates have increased significantly.
- Most parents are pleased with the work of the school. They support the school well through fundraising and by hearing their children read at home.
- The school's partnership with other providers is good. For example, the partnership is helping to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the local alliance to using new assessment arrangements and to tackling pupil absence.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective. The school is thorough in ensuring that all staff know how to respond if they have a concern about a pupil's well-being.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is effective and has played a key part in school improvement since the previous inspection. After that inspection, governors reviewed how they organised the governing body. This helped to establish a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and how the school has tackled underperformance over the last two years. The judicious use of training in areas such as data analysis has improved skills and means that governors have an accurate picture of how well pupils are doing in comparison with others, both locally and nationally.
  - The governing body provides good support and challenge to other school leaders. They know how teaching has been improved over the last two years and where current strengths lie. They ensure that only good teaching is rewarded financially through arrangements for the management of teachers' performance.
  - The governing body checks spending carefully for its impact on the learning of pupils. They monitor closely the use of the pupil premium to ensure that it is used to good effect to support disadvantaged

pupils.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils, staff and most parents agree that the good behaviour seen during the inspection is typical. Inspectors found that pupils have positive attitudes towards learning, and these are a key factor in their good achievement.
- Pupils are courteous and polite. They are clear about the importance of good behaviour and how this can influence their learning. They take a pride in their school and try their hardest most of the time, although just occasionally they do not take enough care to present their work neatly enough.
- There is a happy atmosphere in school and at break times. Pupils of all backgrounds work and play sensibly together showing each other respect and consideration.
- Pupils enjoy school, although they would like to spend more time on subjects other than English and mathematics. They attend regularly and arrive punctually because they are keen to do well. Attendance has risen since the previous inspection because the headteacher and governors have made it clear that holidays should not be taken during the school term.
- Pupils keenly take responsibility. The head boy and girl carry out their roles very diligently. Play leaders ensure that lunchtimes are harmonious.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. Parents agree that the school successfully promotes all aspects of their children's welfare. They are very complimentary about the school's 'well-being' team who play a key role in keeping their children safe and happy. The responses by members of the team to areas of concern are greatly appreciated by pupils, who say that, 'They always listen to us and sort out our problems.'
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. They know what action to take if they encounter cyber-bullying. They are clear about how to avoid possible dangers in the local environment such as the coastal waters and marshes.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of different forms of bullying and say that incidents are rare. Most parents and pupils feel that the school deals well with any problems that do occur. Records confirm this.

## The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Most parents are pleased with the quality of teaching in the school.
- Members of staff get on well with pupils. Their enthusiasm is infectious and they make learning fun. This ensures that pupils enjoy their work and helps them to develop positive attitudes towards learning. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and to know they can do so without fear of failure.
- The teaching of literacy, reading and mathematics is good. Teachers are very knowledgeable about these subjects. They explain things clearly and use questioning well to ensure pupils understand what they are expected to learn and to move learning on. For example, the most able pupils made outstanding progress in Year 6 when the teacher used a problem-solving activity in numeracy to introduce compound interest and how it is calculated.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They are knowledgeable and well trained and provide good-quality support when working with groups or with individuals. The support they give to disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs is of consistently high quality.
- All teachers are thorough at checking how well pupils are doing on a day-to-day basis. Teachers often use pupils' responses as teaching points to correct errors. This means that most of the time work is adapted well to meet pupils' different needs and to provide the right level of challenge for all pupils, including the most able. However, occasionally, teachers do not adapt work quickly enough if pupils are finding it too difficult or too easy.
- Teachers make good use of feedback such as the marking of work or the setting of targets to help pupils develop a secure understanding of how to improve. For example, pupils in Year 6 are very clear about

what they need to do to move up to the next level of attainment when they take national tests.

## **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Pupils' attainment has risen since the previous inspection. In the national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2014, attainment in mathematics and in writing was above average. While attainment in reading was slightly lower, leaders have tackled this dip well. Pupils in the current Year 6 are working at above-average levels in reading, writing and mathematics, reflecting their good achievement over time.
- Across the school, pupils make good progress in English and mathematics from their broadly average starting points at the beginning of Year 3. By Year 6, pupils read skilfully from a wide range of texts. They thoroughly enjoy reading, expressing strong preferences for authors or genre. Pupils write enthusiastically and usually spell and punctuate accurately, using interesting and imaginative vocabulary to engage the reader.
- In mathematics, younger pupils quickly learn ways to add and subtract using different strategies as needed by the work. As they get older, pupils carry out increasingly complex calculations and use this knowledge well to solve problems.
- The school ensures that all groups of pupils achieve equally well. Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has greatly improved over the last two years. They now receive good-quality support that helps them to learn quickly and which meets their needs well.
- There is good challenge for the most able most of the time and they achieve well. This is confirmed by the high number of pupils in Year 6 who are currently working at least two years ahead of the expected levels in English and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium make the same good or better progress as others across the school. Support for these pupils is well matched to individual needs and is helping to close the gap between their attainment and that of others in the school and nationally. In national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2014, disadvantaged pupils were working around two terms behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. They were working at the same level as all pupils nationally in mathematics, were around a term behind in writing and two terms behind in reading. The gaps in attainment are already smaller in the current Year 6.
- The small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve well. Their attainment in English and mathematics is as high as others' by the end of Year 6.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because pupils do not always produce the high-quality work seen in English and mathematics in subjects such as science, history and art. In addition, occasionally the progress of some pupils slows and they do not achieve well enough when work is too difficult or easy for them.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118364
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	462408

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	242
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Hooker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gill Moody
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2–3 May 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01227 272385
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