

Hartford Community Junior School

Mayfield Crescent, Huntingdon, PE29 1UL

Inspection dates 14–15 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Actions taken by leaders, such as checking the quality of teaching, are not yet bringing about good rates of progress, over a long enough period of time or across all subjects.
- Although pupils generally reach average standards, they do better in mathematics than in English.
- Teaching varies too much in quality and is not securing good rates of progress for pupils.
- Activities in lessons are not always matched closely enough to pupils' abilities.
- Feedback in lessons and through marking does not let pupils know clearly enough how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils' attitudes, especially to their learning, mean that they do not always apply themselves to their work as much as they could.
- There are occasional incidents of poorer behaviour and pupils do not always care for each other or keep each other safe at all times.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, are becoming more accurate and rigorous in how well they monitor teaching. As a result, previously weaker achievement of pupils is now better, but not yet good.
- Pupils with additional learning needs generally make good progress.
- The school works closely with partners to provide training opportunities for teachers and to improve the work of leaders.
- Rates of progress in reading are improving so that, in the last year, pupils across the school made good progress in this area of learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, two of which were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work, the quality of marking, and listened to pupils from all year groups reading.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, and school staff including senior and middle leaders. A discussion also took place with a representative from the local authority.
- Safeguarding documentation was looked at, as well as incident logs, information on pupils' progress, minutes of meetings held by the governing body, and the school's self-evaluation.
- Inspectors also took account of the views of 31 parents through the Parent View website and letters from parents.

Inspection team

Peter Lacey-Hastings, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Debra McCarthy

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hartford Junior School is slightly smaller than the average-sized junior school.
- A very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action and school action plus is higher than average. The proportion of pupils with a statement for special educational needs is also higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional funding provided by the government, is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school holds the silver Eco-Schools award and has Healthy Schools status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more teaching is consistently good or better across the school by:
 - matching work more closely to pupils' abilities, especially at the start of lessons
 - allowing more time in lessons for pupils to use key skills, such as writing, by reducing the amount of time teachers spend introducing and explaining activities
 - improving pupils' attitudes to their learning and reducing low-level disruption
 - using marking to show pupils how they can improve their work, and giving them time so they can respond to teachers' comments.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and governance at all levels by:
 - improving systems that check the quality of teaching and learning, such as looking at pupils' work and carrying out lesson observations more rigorously
 - using information on the speed of pupils' progress to check how well the school and teachers are performing
 - increasing the links between staff performance targets, training and pay progression, so that recent improvements in pupils' progress can continue
 - ensuring that good practice in the school is modelled and shared more so that more lessons are good or better.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment in mathematics and English is broadly average. Although attainment in mathematics is slightly higher than English, this gap is closing. A larger proportion of pupils in Year 6 reach the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics than is found nationally.
- Most pupils make expected progress in English and mathematics, but progress in English has been more varied. Across the school, most pupils made good progress in reading last year, while progress in writing has been at expected levels.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with statements for special educational needs, is good because they are taught and supported well. Less able pupils make good progress in mathematics and those with special educational needs made much better progress than similar pupils nationally, especially in writing.
- Achievement in mathematics has improved and reading is now better. Progress in writing is now in line with expected levels across the school but progress across the school and across subjects is not yet good.
- Pupils use a wide range of skills when reading. They are able to link letters and sounds, as well as using other skills to get meaning from what they read. However, some pupils spend too long on reading books that are the same level and this means they are not challenged enough and their progress could be quicker.
- Pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided by the government, make similar progress to other pupils in the school. As a result, the progress of these pupils requires improvement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it varies too much through the school. Pupils are generally engaged, motivated and interested to learn but, in some lessons, teachers' expectations are not always high enough. When this happens, pupils do not always try hard enough to do their best.
- Work is not consistently matched to pupils' abilities. For example, at the start of some mathematics lessons, there is not enough challenge for more-able pupils and their tasks do not enable them to reach the targets they are set in their books.
- The majority of lessons observed during the inspection were good. In these better lessons, teachers spend less time talking at the start and this allows pupils to learn more quickly by practising key skills such as writing. When teachers spend more time talking at the start of lessons and the work is the same for all pupils, then the challenge and the time for pupils to work is reduced.
- Marking in books does not always let pupils know what they need to do to improve their work, nor do pupils have enough time in lessons to respond to teachers' comments. This means there is a longer time between marking and when pupils can show what they have learnt from it. Where teaching is better, time is used in lessons to address learning points raised in marking for

groups and for individuals.

- The high quality of individual education plans for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and the good use of other adults, mean that pupils with additional learning needs are well supported. As a result, these pupils make good progress overall.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Expectations of pupils' behaviour are not consistently high. As a result, there is some low-level disruption and pupils do not always apply themselves or work as hard as they could. This was observed during the inspection in lessons, and pupils themselves say that time is sometimes wasted in class because pupils do not always focus on their work.
- Incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are recorded but not always in enough detail to ensure that leaders can identify trends in order to plan improvements. This means that patterns of misbehaviour continue and pupils' attitudes to their learning and to each other are not as good as they could be.
- Much of pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are mostly courteous and polite, and they help each other when needed. The number of exclusions has been reduced over the past year.
- In the playground, most pupils behave well. Their play is supported with a range of play equipment and activities. For example, there are skipping ropes, playground markings and a shelter. These are well used by most pupils who use them to develop their social skills. However, a few pupils show a lack of care and consideration to others.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and they know who to speak to if they are worried or feel unsafe. For example, they use the 'Tell Me' box to express their concerns and a 'Reflection Room' where they can consider how to improve their behaviour. However, these initiatives are not consistently bringing about good behaviour and occasional incidents of poorer behaviour remain.
- Parents feel that their children are safe at school and that they enjoy school. They also say that the school needs to do better at dealing with behaviour and with bullying. Inspectors also found this to be the case when observing lessons and playtime as well paperwork that recorded behaviour incidents.
- Attendance is good because it is above the national average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership requires improvement because it is not yet bringing about good rates of progress for pupils or consistently good teaching. Pupils and staff are not consistently challenged to do their best.
- Performance targets and training opportunities are used to bring about improvements in teaching. However, while training has been accessed and used to make lessons better, the use of performance targets is not yet robust enough and does not link enough to salary progression for staff.

- Systems have improved to increase the quality and the amount of monitoring by leaders. For example, senior staff regularly meet as the 'assessment team' and check how well pupils are learning. This has led to increased rates of progress for pupils, especially in reading.
- Partnerships are helping to bring about improvements in how well the school is led and managed. For example, professional support has been bought in to support leaders in collecting a wider range of evidence to help them evaluate the school and to make further plans for improvement. The local authority has also offered high-quality training that has been accessed by the school which has led to improvements in teaching.
- Safeguarding requirements are met and the correct checks are made on staff and on adults who regularly visit the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported by a range of opportunities in lessons and at other times. There is a sensory garden in which pupils can use their imagination and be reflective. The school also has a silver Eco-Schools Award and often wins a local gardening competition.
- Cultural awareness is developed through the subjects being taught and events such as sports day where teams represent different countries. For example, Y4 pupils study a village in India, and different countries were studied during the Olympics. Spiritual awareness is encouraged by pupils being reflective during festivals from a variety of religions.
- The pupil premium, which is additional funding provided by the government, is used to provide support for pupils who need help in their learning and for those who have emotional needs. It is used in this way to help these pupils directly with their learning and with their attitude to learning. As a result they make similar progress to other pupils in the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body are taking a greater lead in checking how well the school is progressing. For example, there is now a strategic committee that compares how well the school is doing compared to its improvement plans. This includes knowledge of how the pupil premium is spent and how successful this is. More recently, they set performance targets for the headteacher that link to how well pupils are learning. They also ensure that the leadership of the school sets performance targets for staff which are linked to pupil progress and pay progression. Members of the governing body have a greater knowledge of how well pupils are learning and what the quality of teaching is like. They are also more robust in their understanding of the school budget and decisions they make are having a stronger impact on rates of progress and the quality of teaching. These more recent changes have followed a period of time when members of the governing body have not challenged the school enough to explain weaker pupil performance and to take actions to redress this. Governors are now also using training opportunities to improve their effectiveness.

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

Unique reference number	110696
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	405298

This inspection of the school 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	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicola Brady
Headteacher	Miriam Piper
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2010
Telephone number	01480 454695
Fax number	01480 375029
Email address	office@hartford-jun.cambs.sch.uk

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