

Whitchurch Junior School

Wemborough Road, Stanmore, HA7 2EQ

Inspection dates 10–11 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This is a school where all pupils, whatever their background, culture, age or ability, flourish and learn very well.
- Attainment has been high over the past five years. Pupils make excellent progress in all subjects. The school ensures that 'no pupil is allowed to be left behind'.
- Even though pupils are highly successful in reading, writing and mathematics, occasionally, pupils do not consistently present their work at the same very high standard.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers' questioning skills actively promote and deepen pupils' thinking. Lessons are challenging and exciting and pupils say, 'Learning is fun.' The school has received an award because of its success in this area.
- Behaviour is outstanding at all times. Pupils say they feel very safe and secure in the school. Attendance has been above average over the last two years. Older pupils sum up their feelings by saying, 'I'll have river in my eyes when I leave.'
- The broad curriculum and the excellent facilities significantly contribute to the pupils' high achievements.
- The headteacher provides clear, strong and exceptional leadership and works effectively and closely with the deputy headteacher. All staff work extremely hard to ensure that all pupils achieve their best.
- Governors are highly effective in carrying out their duties to ensure that pupils are always improving on their previous best.
- The local authority has used the school as a model of best practice when supporting other schools to improve their teaching and learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 15 teachers. Five observations were carried out as joint observations with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, a representative from the local authority and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's development plan, the school's self-evaluation, governing body minutes, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, documents relating to safeguarding and records relating to behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors took account of the 35 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed 35 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Sharona Semlali, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Alastair McMeckan	Additional inspector
Victoria Turner	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly larger than most primary schools.
- The proportion supported through school action is well above the national average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for specific groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is well above average and this is increasing.
- Most pupils are from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The largest ethnic groups in the school are pupils of Indian and 'any other Asian' backgrounds.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which are the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school became a junior school in September 2010. When its predecessor school, Whitchurch Middle school, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school has achieved the Thinking Skills Award, Challenge Award (National Association for Children in Education) and Silver Eco Award.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school clubs which are managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of the presentation of pupils' work is consistently of the highest standard.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils join the schools with skills and knowledge at above average levels compared to those found nationally. All classes make rapid progress because of the outstanding teaching and individually tailored support.
- Attainment at the higher levels in mathematics and English is significantly above national averages. A small percentage of pupils are entered for the GCSE examinations in mathematics and all have accomplished a high pass rate. The achievement of the most-able pupils is in the top 4% in the country in mathematics and science.
- Progress is excellent in a wide range of subjects and all teachers make rigorous and regular checks on how well pupils are doing.
- Pupils are extremely confident at reading and enjoy it. They read widely and often both at school and at home. They can easily access their reading resources at any time, using the internet.
- There are no underachieving groups as all pupils make faster progress than pupils nationally. Teachers plan carefully and cater for the diverse needs of their pupils. As a result, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds all attain significantly above all pupils nationally. Those pupils eligible for free school meals are attaining almost as well as those who are not, and attainment for both groups is well above the national average. Progress in English and mathematics is broadly similar for both groups and is significantly above average in all subjects.
- Pupil premium funding is efficiently used to ensure that all pupils get the right support needed. This includes providing extra staffing and training for teaching in small groups, and giving extra individual tuition. Consequently, these pupils make faster progress than all pupils nationally as shown when comparing their average points scores.
- The school is passionate about encouraging all pupils to learn a musical instrument. Some of the funding from the pupil premium enables all pupils to have the opportunity to learn to play an instrument which they can also practise at home. In an outstanding Year 6 music lesson all pupils were effectively learning to play different types of instruments which helped to strengthen their listening, appraisal and thinking skills.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The impact of teaching over time on pupils' achievement is outstanding.
- Teachers have created innovative starters to lessons called 'fascinator', where they devise creative and interactive ways of introducing the aim of the lesson to pupils. A good example of this was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on patterns and sequences. Pupils had to collaborate and compete against other in small groups to try and work out the intended learning for the lesson by only looking at it for a few seconds at a time. Pupils thought that this was an enjoyable way of introducing them to the topic.
- Lessons consistently provide effective challenge to all groups of pupils. In a top Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were learning to solve linear equations. Pupils made rapid progress in solving these because of the teacher's excellent subject knowledge.
- Teachers' excellent questioning stimulates pupils' thinking skills and encourages them to organise their thoughts. They record their ideas onto 'Thinking Maps' when they are working in groups and this sets their work off to a flying start. In a Year 4 history lesson about ancient Egyptians, the teacher's questioning helped to deepen their knowledge about this topic and stimulated many questions from the pupils. The school has been accredited with the Thinking Skills Award from Exeter University because of this work.
- Teachers are extremely confident in using different forms of information and communication

technology to aid pupils' learning and to clarify their understanding. The online school learning system is very popular. Pupils often use this to access some of their homework and other learning activities.

- Pupils have an abundant number of opportunities to write in other subjects besides English including writing emails to other pupils in their link schools in India, Trinidad and China. They produced their own newspaper called 'Whitchurch Watch' and are very proud of it. However, their books occasionally show that the quality of the presentation of their work is not consistently of the highest standard.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They respond very well to challenges and persevere with sustained concentration for lengthy time periods.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well over time; there have been no exclusions from school. Pupils show genuine respect for each other and all adults. They are extremely polite and courteous and will open doors for others. They play really well together in the playground and have a highly developed understanding of the different faiths, cultures and religions. They respond very well to the online reward system that is used. The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the online survey were pleased with the behaviour. However, there were a few minor concerns about behaviour in the playground but the inspection evidence together with the school's documentation over time did not identify any issues.
- Pupils say that they feel extremely safe. They are very comfortable in talking to staff if they have any concerns. They have easy access to an online worry box which is checked daily. Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying and have a good understanding of cyber-bullying and how to keep themselves safe. Parental responses show that they are confident that their children are safe in the school.
- Attendance is well above average.
- Pupils respond very well to being given responsibility. For example: the Young Leaders have led whole school assemblies; House Captains ensure that they walk sensibly around the school; the school council members are excellent ambassadors for making improvements in the school and the Eco Group has helped to design the well-used Eco Garden. This area of the school has been given the Bronze and Silver Eco Awards by the Eco Schools.
- Some of the funding from the pupil premium money enables the school to run its own free breakfast club. This is a valuable resource for parents and carers and provides a healthy free breakfast in a caring and welcoming atmosphere.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders and managers at all levels and the governing body work exceptionally well as a team in the continuous drive to ensure that pupils' achievement is outstanding. The self-evaluation process is succinct and accurate, leading to the setting of appropriate priorities for the school.
- The inspirational and tenacious leadership of the headteacher and her close collaboration with the deputy headteacher have helped teaching to become outstanding over time. All leaders at different levels check regularly and rigorously on the quality of teaching. Senior leaders train and support their own teachers to become outstanding practitioners. A very thorough and comprehensive performance management package and training programme are in place for both teachers and teaching assistants. These help to hold teachers to account for their pupils' achievement as well as improving their practice.
- The school provides a very broad and effective curriculum. It is enhanced by a range of visits

and visitors to support learning and raise standards. For example, pupils spend a night on the Golden Hind and have a residential trip to Wales. A minority of parents and carers were concerned about homework but the inspection evidence found that pupils are proud of it and enjoy the online support by the different websites. Some of the pupils proudly shared a few of their homework projects with the inspectors.

- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and is incorporated well into the curriculum. Pupils are very appreciative of music, art and literature. Displays reflect a wide range of artistic understanding.
- The school is highly successful at promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils and in ensuring that all groups of pupils achieve outstandingly well. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this outstanding school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

The governing body is highly effective and is passionate about ensuring that pupils' achievement is outstanding. The Chair of the Governing Body is very knowledgeable and experienced and ensures that all members receive the appropriate training to be able to carry out their roles effectively. Governors provide the right support and challenge for all leaders as they have a very good understanding of the quality of teaching and achievement information and use this to monitor the school's performance very well. They are fully involved in the decision making for and allocation of the pupil premium funding and ensure that it helps those who are in receipt of it to do at least as well as other pupils. The school has a healthy budget and excellent financial management systems are in place to ensure it stays that way. The governors work closely with the headteacher in ensuring that salary increases are awarded in line with how well pupils are achieving. The governing body ensures that all safeguarding policies and practices meet statutory requirements so all pupils are kept safe.

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	131316
Local authority	Harrow
Inspection number	403628

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	362
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Denesh Kara
Headteacher	Tara Gratton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8951 5380
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