

Weald Junior School

Robin Hood Drive, Harrow Weald, Harrow, HA3 7DH

Inspection dates 6–7 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Achievement is inadequate. Pupils' attainment is low at the end of Year 6, especially in reading and writing.
- Inadequate teaching means that pupils make slow progress over time. Basic literacy skills such as spelling, grammar and punctuation are not taught well enough to enable pupils' writing to improve quickly.
- Teachers do not help pupils by showing them where they could improve. They do not expect enough of the pupils or set work at the right level of challenge; it is often too hard or too easy.
- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement because they do not take enough care with their work and do not always try hard enough to do their best. Occasionally, pupils become inattentive when work does not fully interest them.
- The headteacher and other leaders have not been successful in helping the school to improve. They do not have a clear picture of the main priorities because their systems for checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are not thorough or accurate enough.
- The governing body has not ensured that weaknesses have been tackled to good effect. Despite improvements under the direction of a new Chair, governors have been hindered by difficulties in getting the information they need from the school.
- Middle leaders, such as teachers in charge of subjects, lack experience as well as the skills needed to play a full part in bringing about improvement.
- The school does not properly use additional funding from the government to enable particular groups of pupils to attain as well as others.

The school has the following strengths:

- Pupils feel safe. They behave sensibly in most lessons and at break times.
- Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in learning to speak English.
- Pupils enjoy school, especially clubs, visits and visitors.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made short visits to other lessons.
- Discussions were held with pupils, members of the governing body, members of staff and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 14 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspectors also talked to some parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, heard some pupils read, and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding information.
- The inspectors analysed 11 questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

Mike Capper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Danvir Visvanathan

Additional Inspector

Victoria Turner

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized junior school.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with the largest groups being White British, Black African and Indian. Just over half of all pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding given to the school for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children from service families, is above average. Of these pupils, virtually all are in the first of these categories.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The governing body is responsible for both the junior and the adjoining infant school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is typically good by ensuring that teachers:
 - provide work that is not too hard or too easy for pupils
 - give pupils clear guidance to help them improve and to correct errors or misconceptions
 - always expect enough of pupils and do not accept work that is not good enough.
- Improve the achievement of pupils, especially in reading and writing, by:
 - making sure that spelling, grammar and punctuation are taught well so that pupils gain the required knowledge, understanding and skills quickly and securely
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise and reinforce these writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by making sure that they consistently take care with their work, do their best and maintain their concentration when working.
- Strengthen leadership and management and build the school's capacity to improve by:
 - ensuring that checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress is rigorous and accurate
 - ensuring that written development planning identifies the main priorities, shows how these are to be tackled and how success will be measured
 - improving the skills of middle leaders to enable them to play a full part in securing improvement
 - ensuring that the pupil premium is used properly to support eligible pupils and help them to

achieve well.

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

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate. From low starting points in Year 3, attainment shows little improvement over time and by the end of Year 6 standards remain low. Pupils make inadequate progress during their time at the school and are not prepared well enough for the next stage of their education.
- The school does not successfully promote equality by ensuring that all groups do well. Pupils from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, including White British, Black African and Indian underachieve. The most able do not make rapid enough progress because they are not always provided with the right level of challenge in their work.
- Across the school, pupils have poor literacy skills. Punctuation and spelling are often inaccurate and pupils have a limited knowledge of grammar. The most able pupils read confidently and improve their skills steadily. The less able find it hard to read unknown words because they have a poor knowledge of letters and the sounds they make.
- In national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2013, pupils' attainment in mathematics was broadly average and higher than in reading or writing. However, this difference is not evident in pupils' current work. Pupils enjoy mathematics, but in their books they often make uncorrected mistakes because they have a limited recall of basic number facts such as times tables.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs learn too slowly because their needs are not always met well enough. They progress better and gain in confidence when they are able to learn in small, clear steps which they can readily understand.
- The school does not successfully close the gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and that of others. Eligible pupils were a year behind other pupils in the school in both English and mathematics in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2013. In the spelling, punctuation and grammar test, eligible pupils were two years behind others. The gap is not closing because funding is not used in a targeted way to support eligible pupils rather than others.
- Pupils with English as an additional language, including those newly arrived at the school from overseas, make good progress in learning to speak English. This is because most teachers are aware of the need to check that they understand new vocabulary. They give these pupils suitable opportunities to talk with their classmates so that they can improve their speaking skills.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Teaching does not consistently meet pupils' needs. Teachers set work that is too easy for the most able and too hard for the less able. Teachers' use of questioning does not enable them to identify precisely enough what pupils need to be learn next. This means that opportunities to extend skills are missed. Consequently, pupils do not learn rapidly and their skills, knowledge and understanding improve too slowly.
- The teaching of literacy is especially weak. Skills are not taught systematically and pupils are not shown how to punctuate properly. Consequently, pupils do not gain knowledge, understanding and skills about punctuation, spelling and grammar quickly and securely. In addition, less-able pupils do not read aloud regularly enough so that errors can be identified and corrected.
- Across the school, teachers do not expect enough of their pupils. They accept work from pupils which is not their best, and they do little to help them to improve it. Pupils are unclear about what they have done well or what needs improving. They repeat errors time after time because misconceptions are not corrected by the teacher through marking or in other forms of feedback.
- There are some strengths to teaching across the school. Teachers get on well with pupils and ensure that they feel safe. Teaching assistants help pupils with English as an additional language to take a full part in lessons by checking carefully that they understand new vocabulary.

The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement

- The behaviour of the pupils requires improvement because their attitudes to learning are not always good enough. This is reflected in the way that pupils do not always take enough care with their work. Teachers do not make clear what is expected. As a result, pupils' books are sometimes spoilt by scribbling on covers or by untidy presentation.
- Although pupils behave well in lessons most of the time, occasionally they do not pay enough attention to the teacher and do not concentrate well enough. When this happens, they learn more slowly.
- Nonetheless, the school's records show that incidents of poor conduct are rare. This is confirmed by parents, carers, staff and pupils. As one pupil said, 'We try to be good because that will help us learn more.' Other pupils confirmed that the sensible behaviour seen in most lessons during the inspection is typical.
- The school has some pupils who have been identified as having behavioural issues. They are supported well and school records show that their behaviour improves over time.
- The school successfully promotes good relationships and ensures that there is no discrimination. There is a happy atmosphere on the playgrounds with pupils from different backgrounds playing together and behaving well. They show a good understanding of what sort of behaviour is acceptable at these times.
- When moving around school, pupils are polite and courteous. They are very friendly and happily talk to visitors.
- Attendance is improving and is now broadly average. Members of staff are diligent in discouraging absence and pupils respond well to the school's rewards systems for regular attendance.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that bullying is rare and is tackled well by staff. They are confident that problems will be tackled quickly and know who to turn to if they have a worry. Pupils know that bullying can take many forms. For example, a recent 'e-safety day' helped pupils to be clear about how to avoid cyber-bullying.
- Pupils talk knowledgably about the dangers they may face in the wider world and later life. They explain why it is important to use safe road crossing points and know about the consequences of substance abuse.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leadership is inadequate because it has been unsuccessful in securing essential improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Since the last inspection, leadership has been insufficiently focused on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Consequently, the quality of both has declined.
- School leaders have an unrealistic picture of school effectiveness. Their monitoring lacks rigour, is over-generous in its evaluations and is not pinpointing the main areas for improvement. The school has a wealth of data on pupils' progress but this information is unreliable because teachers' assessments are not always accurate. Development plans do not show clearly enough how actions taken are expected to have an impact on pupils' achievement or secure rapid improvement.
- Middle leaders lack experience and not all are good role models in their own practice. Some lack the skills necessary to tackle weaknesses and they play too little part in driving improvement.
- The school's systems for improving teaching are ineffective. Teachers' work is checked but leaders do not take enough account of how well pupils are learning over time when evaluating the quality of teaching. Leaders do not make sure that advice and school policies are followed consistently by all members of staff. For example, a new marking policy is being followed with only varying degrees of success across the school.
- Pupil premium funding is not used properly. Many of the activities funded by the pupil premium,

such as group work taken by a designated teacher, are directed at only a few of those pupils for whom the funding is granted. Leaders do not do enough to ensure that spending is helping to close the gap between the attainment of eligible pupils and that of others.

- The school focuses well on encouraging healthy lifestyles and promoting pupils' well-being. Pupils participate keenly in physical activity. They are pleased that the new primary school sports funding is already providing more opportunities to take part in activities such as gymnastics so that they can fulfil their physical potential. The school has clear plans to check the impact of spending once recent initiatives have been in place longer.
- The curriculum does not promote basic skills successfully. There are too few opportunities for pupils to practise their writing when working in different subjects so that their writing skills can improve more quickly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development requires improvement. They do not always learn to take in their work or to develop the positive attitudes towards learning they will need to succeed as they get older. Nonetheless, there are useful and numerous opportunities for pupils to learn about their own and other cultures. The school makes effective use of visits and visitors to bring learning alive and this is one of the main reasons why pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Over the last year, the local authority has identified that the school is not operating effectively. Since then, it has provided the right level of support to the governing body to ensure that weaknesses in leadership are tackled more quickly than in the past but it is too soon to see the benefits of this additional help.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have not been successful in ensuring that the school has built on the strengths identified in the previous inspection. They do not ensure that the pupil premium is being used to good effect to close the gap between eligible pupils and others. Governors know where teaching is especially weak and how it is being supported but their efforts have not been sufficient to ensure the rapid improvement that is required. There have been recent improvements since the appointment of an experienced Chair of Governors. For example, training in areas such as how to check pupils' progress means that governors now have a clear picture of how well the school is performing in comparison with others. They know that achievement is not good enough and are tackling this by setting other leaders sharp targets for improvement. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this and the pace of change in improving provision in the junior school has been hindered by difficulties in getting information from other leaders. For example, it took several months before the school's written plans for improvement were made available to governors so that they could have an input. Governors ensure that procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.

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	102200
Local authority	Harrow
Inspection number	440955

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	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	381
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marie-Louise Nolan
Headteacher	Michael Curtin
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 March 2012
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