

Hartford Community Junior School

Mayfield Crescent, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 1UL

Inspection dates

15–16 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The new leadership team has not yet secured enough improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is too slow from their starting points in Year 3.
- Recent changes to the curriculum, and improvements made to teaching and learning, have not had time to impact sufficiently on pupils' achievement.
- Some teachers do not use assessment information well enough to pitch work at the correct level of difficulty. This has an impact on the progress that pupils make, particularly the most able and those who need to catch up.
- Middle leaders do not make regular checks on the quality of pupils' work in their subject areas. This means that weaknesses are not picked up early enough.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length in English or in other subjects. As a result, the progress that they make in improving their writing skills is not as good as it should be.
- The school does not make effective use of the additional funding it receives for disadvantaged pupils. These pupils continue to underachieve.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has implemented many important changes very quickly. He has successfully created a culture of high expectations for all.
- All members of staff share the headteacher's determination to improve the quality of education provided. The quality of teaching is improving and pupils are now making better progress as a result.
- Governors provide effective support for the school and hold leaders to account.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils behave well, show good attitudes to learning and are well cared for by staff.
- Parental support for the school and the new leadership team is overwhelmingly positive. Parents recognise and appreciate the improvements that have been made in the last year.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - embedding the recent changes to the improve the curriculum
 - ensuring that subject leaders make regular checks on the quality of work in their areas
 - improving the quality of the additional support that is provided for disadvantaged pupils so that the attainment gap with other pupils nationally diminishes
 - making sure that the information on the school's website meets all statutory requirements.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teachers:
 - make better use of assessment to identify gaps in pupils' learning and use this information to help pupils to make up lost ground, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - provide better levels of challenge to the most able pupils.
- Raise achievement by:
 - ensuring that teaching is typically good and more is outstanding
 - increasing the number of opportunities pupils are given to write at length, in both English and in subjects across the curriculum.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium 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 headteacher has been the catalyst for the many changes since he was appointed a year ago, but improvements in teaching, learning and assessment have not been rapid enough to make a significant impact on pupils' progress and attainment. Underperformance persists.
- Subject leadership is not effective enough. Although school leaders have overseen some improvements to the school's curriculum, the quality of work in science, history and geography remains weak. A new curriculum plan was put in place at the beginning of this term but it is too early to judge the impact.
- A suitably sharp focus on improving English and mathematics has led to improvements in both subjects. However, systems that subject leaders use for checking on the work of teachers, in these and other curriculum areas, need to be improved in order to measure progress and ensure that agreed policies are being implemented.
- Every member of staff responding to the online inspection survey agrees that the school has improved since it was previously inspected. Other school leaders, governors and staff share the headteacher's strong determination to build on recent improvements and provide pupils with high-quality education.
- The headteacher's drive and energy is at the heart of school improvement. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. They have a clear grasp of what the school does well, and where it needs to improve further. The transformation of the school's culture is the bedrock on which many other improvements are built. For example, pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to do well. Staff agree that the school's culture is aspirational for pupils, and encourages calm and orderly behaviour.
- The headteacher quickly recognised the need to improve teaching across the school. Although more still needs to be done, weak teaching has been eradicated, and the majority of pupils currently in the school make better progress than in previous years. The headteacher's 'can-do' approach is effective. Faced with teacher recruitment difficulties, he has employed subject specialists to lead physical education and computer studies lessons.
- Staff morale is high. In their online survey, staff strongly agreed they are proud to work at Hartford Juniors. Much is asked of staff, but all know that they will be given the necessary guidance and training to help them to succeed. One member of staff said, 'You feel valued, the head listens to you, changes are explained, the new ideas are in the interests of the school, and they're working.'
- The management of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved since the previous inspection. Systems to track the progress that these pupils make are much improved and the impact of any additional support that is provided is now monitored more closely. However, school leaders recognise that further improvements are required in this area.
- Parents say that their children are particularly enthused by the interesting educational visits that are now a regular feature of school life and a much wider range of clubs after school. This is helping pupils to develop more positive attitudes to learning.

- The school is fully inclusive. It is a harmonious community where everyone recognises and celebrates each individual's uniqueness. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Different religious groups visit and speak about their understanding of 'faith' in the context of modern life.
- Pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain is promoted effectively. Pupils understand British values. They develop a sense of 'community' and write persuasively in favour of 'democracy'. A typical pupil comment was, 'We should respect other people because we want them to respect us.'
- Effective use of primary school sports funding benefits pupils and staff. Specialist coaching enables pupils to learn new and more advanced skills and techniques. Pupils say, 'The coaches know more and explain better.' Staff learn how to teach sports more effectively. Pupils tackle their 'Mile-a-Day' run enthusiastically because they understand the benefit of exercise to healthy living.
- The local authority has helped ensure that key staff, for example the leaders of English and mathematics, have good-quality training. The headteacher's outward-looking approach has resulted in beneficial links with local schools. School staff have also benefited from working with a local leader of education.
- Nine in every ten parents responding to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, would recommend the school to another parent. Parents offering comments, and those spoken to during the inspection, were full of praise for the headteacher and overwhelmingly supportive of the changes he has made. Typical comments include 'With the new headteacher the school is in good hands' and 'The school has recently had a new headteacher who is making improvements all the time. Keep it up!'

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is effective. Governors responded very positively to the review of governance, and introduced beneficial changes, for example to how the governing body is organised and decisions made. All decisions taken about spending are firmly based on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Governors support school leaders and share their ambition for the school and its pupils, for example ensuring that new initiatives, such as the library, are funded.
- The skills of each individual governor are used efficiently. For example, a governor with extensive knowledge of finance offers expertise in budget-planning.
- Thorough checks on the progress of pupils ensure that they now do well, and enable governors to question and challenge school leaders if they do not.
- Governors check that decisions about pay increases are justified by a wide range of evidence.
- Governors say that they are proud that the school has a real sense of community.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders and governors ensure that all staff and governor training is up to date and that the school fully complies with current safeguarding guidance. All parents responding to Parent View agree their children feel safe at the school and are well looked after.

- Staff thoroughly understand their roles. In their 'planner' they have a useful, readily available reminder of their responsibilities and what to do if they have any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies across the school in different age groups, classes and subjects. Over time it has not been of a good enough standard to enable pupils to make good progress through the school. Teachers have not had a clear understanding of what their pupils should know, understand and do by the end of each year or by the age of 11.
- The assessment system has been in place for two terms. Teachers are still developing a clear understanding of how to gauge the progress of their pupils, particularly those who struggle and need to catch up. As a result, tasks occasionally can sometimes be too hard or too easy.
- Teaching of the basic skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling is good. However, teachers do not expect pupils to use these skills to the same high standard when they write in subjects other than English. For example, a pupil who may know the purpose of different forms of punctuation will not think to apply them when writing in a history lesson.
- Staff recognise that some pupils need to catch up and plan accordingly. One parent stated, 'My child was weak at maths. An after-school club was set up, her maths skills developed in leaps and bounds.'
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils, linked to clear rules and routines, promote good behaviour and ensure that lessons are uninterrupted. Staff create safe and stimulating classroom environments in which pupils develop self-confidence. In particular, pupils know that they can have a go and risk being wrong because they are encouraged to express and refine their views.
- Staff are alert to any misconceptions pupils may have during lessons. During the inspection, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson for example, the teacher quickly recognised that pupils did not understand a task about negative numbers. She brought the pupils together, reshaped the lesson and ensured that the learning was clear. As a result, pupils completed the task successfully.
- Teachers deploy their assistants effectively to support learning during lessons. Teachers' thorough preparation ensures that teaching assistants fully understand the lesson's purpose.
- The teaching of speaking and listening skills is good. For example, staff provide many opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking and listen to one another. In many lessons, this is also very beneficial to the pace and depth of learning.
- Teachers promote a love of learning and pupils' intellectual curiosity. In a Year 4 science lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to take a responsible attitude to their own study by challenging them to use a range of reference sources to research the digestive system. Pupils progressed well.
- Pupils generally take pride in their work. Teachers encourage and expect pupils to write legibly and keep their workbooks to a good standard of presentation.
- Effective use of homework promotes pupils' learning. Some activities require pupils to

practise basic skills, such as mathematical tables, while others offer opportunities to delve deeper and further into research topics being taught in school.

- Staff communicate with parents effectively. For example, parents share information about their children at the start of the school year. Staff say that they benefit from hearing about the 'whole' child, and 'what makes them tick'. Parents' favourable comments included, 'I feel the school works really well with me as the parent to get the best for my child.' All parents responding to Parent View and expressing an opinion believe their child is taught well at Hartford Juniors.
- Staff's willingness and desire to improve contributes strongly to their overall effectiveness. They frequently draw on the advice of others to improve their teaching.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. All parents responding to Parent View, and those spoken to, feel that their children are happy at school.
- Pupils' good attitudes to learning stem from the new culture of achievement and aspiration. Pupils demonstrate many traits of a good learner, such as perseverance. They talk positively about the changes, for example, 'Ever since the head came he has made lots of changes to help us learn better.'
- Assemblies are special times. Pupils celebrate one another's achievements. They enjoy opportunities to talk about learning. During the inspection, for example, they heard true stories of how familiar famous people struggled to learn, but succeeded through resilience and perseverance.
- Pupils enjoy opportunities to play a role in the life of their school. Trained pupils mediate between those who fall out, and help them resolve their differences. The elected school council has a clear role in school life.
- Staff effectively promote pupils' well-being. For example, pupils struggling to build relationships with their peers are nurtured and encouraged.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Whether on the roads or the internet, they understand the signs to look out for, and what to do if they are worried.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The overwhelming majority of parents responding to Parent View agree that the school makes sure that its pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils responding to their survey, and those spoken to during the inspection, all agreed that the headteacher had introduced a very clear behaviour policy that everyone understands. Pupils say that they know staff will implement rules consistently, and that there are rewards and consequences.
- Exclusions are rare and the number is falling because the headteacher has changed the culture of the school, particularly pupils' understanding of attitudes to learning. The quality of teaching is better, too, and more closely meets each pupil's individual needs.

- Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare. Any that occur, they say, are quickly dealt with by staff. Pupils say that they feel safe in the school, well cared for, and that there are adults they can talk to if they are worried. All parents expressing a view believe that the school deals effectively with bullying. In discussion, parents said that they like that the headteacher stands at the gate in the morning and is always willing to listen to any concerns or worries they have.
- Attendance improved last year and is broadly average. The school offers rewards to encourage good attendance. Equally, the school follows up quickly if attendance should fall so that pupils do not get into bad habits. The recently appointed and knowledgeable parent inclusion worker is already making an impact, particularly in supporting the small number of pupils regularly absent from school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, pupils have not made the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics. This has resulted in pupils leaving Hartford Juniors, at the end of Year 6, with standards that are below those of pupils nationally with similar starting points at the beginning of Year 3.
- Reading standards, while improving, remain too low. The school recognises this and has begun to make changes. Reading is now much more a part of everyday life than a year ago. A new, attractive library encourages pupils to pick up a book. Recently arrived books provide for a wider range of styles and interests.
- While pupils' knowledge of the 'tools' of writing is good, their writing rarely 'grabs' the reader's attention. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to write at length or for different purposes, in English or in other subjects. This limits the progress that they make across the school.
- The quality of work in pupils' books, and the school's information about pupils' progress, shows that pupils are beginning to make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics than previously. These improvements reflect improvements in leadership and the quality of teaching. However, the changes that have been made have not been in place long enough to overcome the legacy of lower standards at the school. This particularly affects older pupils who have been in school longer.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making better progress than previously, from their generally lower starting points. The extra help that they receive is being more closely tailored to support each individual's needs and the progress that they make is now monitored more effectively. This is better than at the time of the previous inspection, but school leaders recognise that further improvements are necessary if these pupils are to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school make progress at a similar rate to their peers. This means that the gap in between their performance and that of other pupils nationally is not reducing. School leaders recognise that the particular needs of each pupil must be considered more closely and better support provided to ensure that they do not underachieve.
- The most able pupils do not make good progress and too few achieve the higher levels of which they are capable. The work seen in pupils' books from the last school year

shows that not enough challenge is being provided for these pupils. A focus on providing greater levels of challenge in this new school year has led to improvements in some classes, but this remains a weakness that needs to be addressed.

- Pupils do well in physical education and computer studies. They benefit from the clear knowledge and understanding of these staff in their subjects. Explanations are clear and techniques refined.

School details

Unique reference number	110696
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10019629

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vicky Baker
Headteacher	Steve Davis
Telephone number	01480 454695
Website	www.hartfordjuniorschool.co.uk/
Email address	head@hartford-jun.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 June 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupils' results, performance tables, nor pupil premium spending and analysis on its website. In addition, information about the curriculum and the governing body is incomplete.
- The school is an average-sized junior school.
- There are two classes in each year group. In the mornings, the school operates a third Year 6 class.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is broadly average.
- The overall proportion of pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum

expectations of pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- The headteacher of Werrington Primary School, a local leader of education, supports the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited all classrooms. Some visits were conducted jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors observed small groups of pupils being taught.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors observed pupils in other activities and as they moved around the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, teachers, other staff and governors. Inspectors also met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors met with pupils to discuss their experiences at school.
- The views of 36 parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. The inspectors also held informal discussions with parents. The inspectors also considered the views of 19 members of staff and three pupils who responded to their online surveys.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents and information. These included the school's development plan, checks on the quality of teaching, curriculum plans and minutes of meetings of the governing body, and pupils' behaviour and attendance records. The inspectors also looked at arrangements for and records of safeguarding procedures.
- Following the inspection of 15–16 September 2016, Ofsted decided that additional evidence was needed to secure the judgements. Two inspectors returned to the school to complete the inspection on 6 October 2016.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Dooley	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Tomkow	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Mitcheson	Her Majesty's Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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