

Brookland Junior School

Elm Drive, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire EN8 0RX

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In 2016 and 2017, pupils by the end of key stage 2 did not make good enough progress in mathematics. Pupils' outcomes in mathematics were significantly below the average.
- Leaders and governors do not place enough emphasis on evaluating the progress of different groups of learners. This is especially so for disadvantaged pupils who achieve well below other pupils nationally. Consequently, leaders have an overgenerous evaluation of the school and improvement plans are not precise enough.
- Pupils' behaviour in class, particularly boys', is not always focused when work does not challenge or motivate them. As a result, they do not achieve as well as the girls.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects. As a result, progress and attainment in writing and mathematics vary across the school and are not consistently good.
- Teachers' expectations are not high. Consequently, pupils' presentation, handwriting and spelling are not consistently good, and misconceptions are often not corrected.
- Attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains below average and rates of persistence absence are too high.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has identified some key areas where improvements are needed. His actions are beginning to address a legacy of poor achievement over time.
- Leaders have developed strong relationships with, and the support of, parents and the wider community.
- Brookland Junior is an inclusive school. Pupils are proud of their school and say that they feel happy and safe in the school's caring environment. Pupils take an active role in improving their school.
- Girls achieve well across the school. Their achievement, in 2017, was average for reading, writing and mathematics.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are strong and positive. Pupils are also respectful of each other and play well together.
- Pupils enjoy a full range of activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Personal development is promoted well. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and how to have healthy lifestyles.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to accelerate pupils' progress across the curriculum, particularly in mathematics and writing, by ensuring that:
 - pupils are given more frequent opportunities to develop their calculation, problem-solving and writing skills across the curriculum
 - teachers check pupils' learning and understanding more closely in lessons, to ensure that misconceptions are tackled swiftly, and further challenge is provided when required.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders' self-evaluation and action planning focus more closely on different groups of pupils and the outcomes they are expected to achieve
 - pupil premium funding is targeted more precisely to meet the individual needs of disadvantaged pupils to accelerate their progress.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
 - ensuring that pupils take greater pride in their work
 - raising staff expectations of pupils' attitude to learning to ensure that pupils, particularly boys, focus on their learning more closely in lessons and develop a better work ethic
 - ensuring that different groups of pupils attend school more frequently and understand the importance of regular attendance.

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

- Leaders and governors have been overgenerous with their self-evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness. Evaluation documents and plans do not always precisely identify the school's key weaknesses, or spell out what leaders expect to achieve.
- Leaders have not maintained a sharp focus on different groups of pupils within the school. As a result, the differences in achievement between disadvantaged pupils in the school and other pupils nationally have not diminished and boys have continued to achieve less well than girls.
- Leaders ensure that the performance of teachers is well managed and linked to the school's priorities. However, where teaching is not good, leaders' suggested actions for improvement are not followed up rigorously enough. Consequently, the quality of teaching does not improve quickly enough.
- The new headteacher has restructured the leadership team and there is a recognition among leaders that further work is required to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they should. Additional support from the local authority has assisted leaders in their work to implement early improvements in English and mathematics. However, many strategies are new, and it is too early to see the full impact of the actions taken.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to learn in different ways and undertake 'enrichment' activities. Pupils speak positively about a range of subjects and their work is displayed throughout the school, including some exemplary art work inspired by the artist George Seurat. However, the assessment of pupils' outcomes in some curriculum areas is not sufficiently refined to ensure that gaps in learning and skills are identified efficiently, so that all pupils make as much progress as they can.
- Pupils have the opportunity to influence what is taught and additional roles, such as 'school improvement leaders' within the children's committee, ensure that pupils are valued and make contributions to the running of the school. For example, the leaders for mathematics are reviewing the effectiveness of the new resources which have been purchased.
- The majority of parents, who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are very happy with school life and would recommend the school. They are pleased with the changes the new headteacher has made and feel that all staff are approachable. Parents are well informed because communication is good.
- The school's vision and values are embedded and understood by all. The 'Brookland six values' (drive to succeed, reflectiveness, pursuit of challenge, collaboration, thinking skills, readiness) underpin all the school's work and help pupils with their learning. One pupil said that the school's values 'help us to be better learners'.
- The staff are happy and the majority feel the school is well managed. They understand what the school is aiming to achieve and are proud to be members of staff at the school.

- Leaders ensure that British values are promoted and incorporated into daily life through being a Unicef Rights Respecting School. In 2017, the school achieved the level 1 Unicef award. This work also supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and is a strength of the school. Pupils are proud of their school and can clearly explain the importance of values such as tolerance and respect. They value one another and say that it is OK to be different at their school. One pupil said, 'We don't exclude people with differences. We accept anyone and we help them.'
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are well supported. Leaders assess pupils' needs promptly and effective professional development opportunities have ensured that staff deliver high-quality interventions. Funding is used effectively and innovatively to provide individualised support which ensures that pupils secure good progress.
- As a result of the physical education and sport premium additional funding being used effectively, more pupils have access to a range of sporting activities. Additional resources have supported teachers to develop their practice and overall confidence to teach physical education. Pupils enjoy sport. More are participating in sporting activities and leading healthier lifestyles. The 'daily mile' initiative has been successfully introduced and pupils value its benefits, stating that it 'refreshes our mind and gets our brain ready'. During the inspection, the pupils had the chance to meet and work with an athlete. Pupils regularly take part in sporting competitions and are currently the district sports champions for Waltham Cross and Cheshunt.
- Pupils have access to a range of extra-curricular activities, including a very popular breakfast and after-school club. Every pupil learns to play the recorder. Pupils take full advantage of these opportunities and participation is high.

Governance of the school

- Since the previous inspection, governors have not challenged leaders strongly enough about the decline in standards. They have not rigorously checked on how well the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used to improve the outcomes for this group.
- However, since the appointment of the new headteacher, governance is improving. Governors are now fully involved in school development planning and regularly complete monitoring activities linked to the plan. Governors are committed to ensuring that the school improves and are now more aware of the issues facing the school.
- Governors carry out the process of performance management of the headteacher and are increasingly challenging school leaders and teachers. They have higher expectations of staff and are starting to hold them to account more effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There are three senior leaders who are trained as designated safeguarding leaders and who support each other if needed. This ensures that there is always an effective safeguarding leader available to staff should any concerns arise.

- Leaders check that everybody who works with pupils is suitable to do so. Records of employment are kept well and in good order.
- Staff are regularly trained in a wide range of safeguarding matters and risk assessment procedures.
- Leaders ensure that any referrals to external agencies are acted on rapidly and efficiently. Leaders follow through to ensure that the appropriate outcomes are in the best interests of the child.
- Staff ensure that pupils are well taught about safety and have the skills to be independent and make the right choices to stay safe. For example, the children's committee told an inspector what to do if they had any concerns when working online.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View agree that the school keeps their children safe.
- The school site is safe, well maintained and well supervised.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good across the school. Although there is effective teaching within some year groups and classes, too much variability across the school hinders pupils' progress so that it is not always good in reading, writing and mathematics. Occasionally, work set by teachers is too hard for some pupils, while in other lessons the work is too easy.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' work. As a result, pupils' spelling, handwriting and presentation are often not good enough. Furthermore, errors or misconceptions are not identified or addressed by teachers, so pupils continue to make the same mistakes.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient high-quality opportunities in mathematics to develop pupils' thinking and reasoning skills. This means that pupils lack confidence, or struggle to apply their knowledge or skills or to solve problems. Leaders have identified this and are already working with teachers to deepen pupils' understanding and knowledge in mathematics.
- Staff, including teaching assistants, have good relationships with pupils. Pupils respond well when they work together or discuss challenges. However, there are occasions when the activities provided for pupils are either not matched well enough to their needs or do not sustain their interest. Where this happens, some pupils, mainly boys, lose concentration which prevents them from making the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ask pupils a range of interesting questions which challenge their learning. However, pupils often rely on adult support rather than finding out the answers for themselves or moving onto more challenging work when they are ready.
- Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to practise their writing and mathematics skills across the curriculum. However, this is being addressed by leaders and progress is improving across the school. Inspectors observed an example of this in

a Year 4 art lesson where pupils were evaluating a painting using their knowledge of noun phrases, similes and metaphors.

- Pupils are well supported and enjoy reading. Current pupils are reading with increasing fluency and confidence, including those who need to catch up quickly. Pupils benefit from the well-resourced library and can talk about a wide range of books.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for groups of pupils within the classroom, or outside the classroom where they work with specific groups delivering targeted provision. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress.
- The school's marking policy is inconsistently implemented. Consequently, the quality of feedback pupils receive from their teachers varies markedly from class to class.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They look smart in their school uniforms and are becoming more confident learners who enjoy a challenge. They say that most lessons are fun and that they enjoy the range of subjects. Pupils understand the school's values and how they support their learning. They are friendly, polite and respectful of each other and adults.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They know about the different forms of bullying and whom to speak to if they have a problem. They say they learn how to keep safe when using technology, including the internet, because of the guidance they receive from the teachers.
- Pupils report that they are well looked after and that 'the adults guide us'. Their view is shared by parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire. One parent said, 'The teachers and the teaching assistants all truly care for all the children.'
- Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and know about the contributions made by diet and exercise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because when teaching is not good, some pupils, mainly boys, lose interest and become distracted. Consequently, this slows their learning. However, most pupils conduct themselves well around the school, including at breaktimes.
- A new behaviour policy has recently been introduced. This has resulted in a consistent approach from staff with agreed expectations of pupils across the school day. The majority of pupils behave well around the school. Pupils say that behaviour has improved. They recognise how the very small number of pupils who find good behaviour more difficult are helped to improve through the support they receive from adults. Most parents who responded to Parent View agree that the school makes sure

that pupils are well behaved, although a small minority expressed concerns about a very small number of pupils.

- Pupils say that any instances of bullying are rare and are dealt with quickly by staff.
- Pupils do not consistently present their work with care and attention. This is partly because teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation are too low.
- The attendance of pupils is broadly average. However, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities attend less well. Some pupils do not understand the importance of frequent attendance well enough and the impact this has on their learning.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement. Standards in 2016 at the end of key stage 2 were below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, and in grammar, punctuation and spelling. This was also true for 2017. In 2016 and 2017, pupils' progress by the end of key stage 2 in mathematics was below the average. Although pupils are starting to make better progress, the impact of previous weaker teaching is still evident.
- Since the previous inspection, boys have achieved less well than girls in English. Current school assessment information shows that boys generally do not achieve as well as girls across the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils have not achieved well since the previous inspection. In 2016, the progress of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was below the average in reading and mathematics. Although this improved in reading in 2017, mathematics progress remained below the national average. These pupils were not well prepared for secondary school in mathematics.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Their progress is checked regularly and support is focused on specific areas for development.
- Lesson observations and work in pupils' books show that in some classes the most able pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities to challenge the most able pupils to excel.
- Pupils' books show that there are inconsistencies in the quality of their outcomes across the curriculum. For example, writing in subjects other than English often shows a reduction in the quality of work. Often, pupils' and teachers' expectations of handwriting quality and spelling accuracy are too low.

School details

Unique reference number	117233
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10037650

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	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynda Dobranja
Headteacher	Gavin Douglas
Telephone number	01992 624 487
Website	www.brooklandjm.herts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@brooklandjm.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 November 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is an average-sized school.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils entering the school come from Brookland Infant School.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than the national average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school shares a site with the partner nursery and infant school which are inspected separately.
- A breakfast club and an after-school club are provided by the school.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many staff changes, including the headteacher who began the role in September 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in every class. The majority of observations were undertaken jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors looked through a wide range of pupils' work across the curriculum with leaders and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders to review provision in a range of areas, including the curriculum; SEN and/or disabilities; pupil premium funding; pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare; and safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and its areas for development.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes, when pupils were moving in and around the school, and during lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents to ascertain the effectiveness of safeguarding. Documents included the single central record, policies and procedures, training certificates and risk assessments.
- Inspectors took account of all the responses to Ofsted questionnaires. These included 30 from staff, 70 from parents on free text, and 105 from parents on Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection and held a separate meeting with a small group of pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Rachel Welch, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Pryor	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Ginzler-Maher	Ofsted 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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